

The Baptist Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Thursday, April 8, 1993

Published Since 1877

The dilemma of marketing —

Honesty, God's power key ingredients in growing churches

By Ken Hemphill

Third in a series

In an earlier part of this series I mentioned "marketing the church." We have always marketed the church. Anytime you tell someone about your church, you are marketing the church. A

church sign, a directional sign, or a church bulletin are all marketing tools. However, in recent years there has been a more focused attention on marketing. On the positive side, this should challenge us to do a more professional job of marketing our church. We are

about the King's business and the work of the church deserves our very best efforts. Look at all the things you are doing now to market your church and see how you could do them more effectively. Look at new ways to present your church and its ministries to your community.

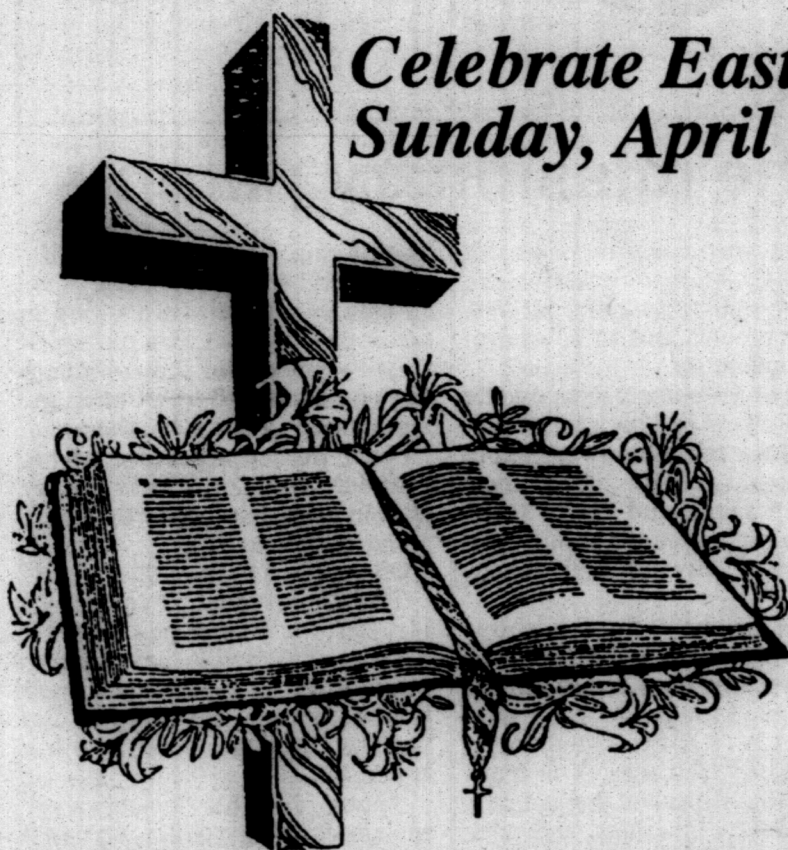
Several words of caution are in order. 1) Even the most sophisticated marketing strategy will not cause your church to grow. God

boomers we should advertize the services and down play commitment and giving. We had hoped that once boomers joined the church they would understand that now they were expected to give and to serve. But once confronted with these new expectations some boomers left with questions about the integrity of the church. They must have felt that they had been taken by a "bait and switch" strategy.

until they are transformed by the Holy Spirit. Boomers who become followers of Jesus Christ will make deep commitments. But the church must market with integrity, telling what the costs of discipleship are from the beginning, and follow up with discipleship training.

Do not design your strategy based solely on secular observation of the tendencies of any age group, but upon the supernatural

**Celebrate Easter
Sunday, April 11**



"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies. And whoever lives and believes in me will never die.

Do you believe this?" — John 11:25



SOUTHERN BAPTIST CENTER FOR
CHURCH GROWTH

Ken Hemphill, director

grows a church, not any program or strategy. And, if the product you market is not of high quality, all the advertizing in the world will not enable you to sell that product. For example you can market your church as having quality Bible study or warm fellowship, but if neither exist, the marketing will have little effect on growth. 2) One dilemma of marketing is that it works. A recent church growth newsletter decried the fact that baby boomers are now leaving the church in great numbers and that they have been unwilling to support the church financially. The truth is that some leaders of "boomer conferences" have said if we were to reach the

We must be careful that our churches advertize honestly, and that we call for discipleship commitment for all those who would follow Christ. We've been told that boomers are unwilling to make commitments. What's new! Unsaved persons of any age are uncommitted to the cause of Christ

power of God to transform lives. We cannot forget that our work is supernatural and, therefore, it is divinely empowered.

Hemphill is director, Southern Baptist Center for Church Growth, a cooperative venture of the Home Mission Board and the Sunday School Board.

"The controversy began in Houston. Let it end there! We need an entire session . . . when we confess our sins to God and each other, forgive one another, and pray for God's forgiveness."

— page 4

April is Alcohol Awareness Month

Alcohol facts

- ◆ Alcohol is an anesthetic drug. It puts the brain to sleep just like Novocaine makes the mouth numb.
- ◆ Brain damage begins with the first drink, and becomes severe in alcoholics.
- ◆ Like other lethal drugs, an overdose of alcohol can bring on death by affecting the part of the brain that controls breathing. As a matter of fact, three people die each day from alcohol overdoses.
- ◆ Heavy drinking makes it harder for the human body to fight off infections. Combined with alcohol-related, risky sexual behavior, a prime pathway for deadly diseases is created.
- ◆ Cirrhosis of the liver cannot be reversed and is a lingering, painful way to die. Almost 85% of deaths due to cirrhosis are associated with alcohol. Cancer of the liver is also related to alcohol use.
- ◆ Alcohol can reduce key male hormones responsible for developing and maintaining physical maturity in men.
- ◆ A number of male reproductive system problems are tied to alcohol.

- ◆ Fetal Alcohol Syndrome — brought on by mothers who use alcohol during pregnancy — is the third leading cause of mental retardation in babies. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome is also one of the only completely preventable causes of birth defects.
- ◆ For many people (especially youths), marketing and packaging blurs the line between alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages.
- ◆ For example, "coolers" go by many harmless-sounding names, like "breezers," "fruit-flavored malt coolers," and "spritizers." Some companies even tout the healthiness of their alcoholic beverages by mentioning such ingredients as fruit juice.
- ◆ Coolers cost about the same or only slightly more than soft drinks and are often placed next to soft drinks in stores, which make coolers seem more attractive and less like alcoholic beverages. Have you noticed your stores' display of coolers and other alcoholic beverages?
- ◆ Highly-sweetened coolers conceal the toxic alcohol taste, when in fact one 12-ounce cooler has as much — or more — alcohol as the same amount of beer or one "shot" of whiskey, rum, or vodka.
- ◆ Coolers are alcohol-laced junk food. Drinking two or three coolers wastes a meal's worth of calories.
- ◆ Some alcoholic beverage producers actually have an "education"

program for schools. Are your children being taught to "drink responsibly?"

- ◆ Almost 75% of adults polled said they favor health warnings on alcoholic beverages, and nearly half said they would like to see alcohol advertising banned.
- ◆ The Outdoor Advertising Association of America in 1990 adopted a voluntary code that calls for removal of all alcohol and tobacco billboard advertisements located within 500 feet (about one city block) of schools, houses of worship, and hospitals. Are the billboard owners in your community complying with the guidelines? For more information, contact the association at 1212 New York Ave. NW, Suite 1210, Washington, DC 20005.
- ◆ To find out how you can help combat alcohol abuse in Mississippi, contact the Christian Action Commission of the Mississippi Baptist Convention at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800.
- ◆ To find out about the program of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence in your area, call toll-free 1-800-475-HOPE.

— Based on information from the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Guy Henderson

Are we losing interest in missions?

A group of Southern Baptists said "apathy will be the most important issue in church life as the next century begins." A survey of 1,200 Baptists made in April 1992 and re-surveyed in October of the same year indicated a slipping interest in personnel and funding for home and foreign missions. Low attendance at the SBC mission nights as hundreds walk out after the president's election is stated to be sufficient evidence that interest is waning.

"Too self-centered, too self-assured, too complacent" is the assessment of Don Argue, president of the National Association for Evangelicals, on the condition of American religion today. Evangelism has become "anemic" in the past 25 years. Hundreds of other examples and quotes could be given which would compose a portrait of a graveside benediction over missions.

Mission interest shifting, yes; losing interest, I doubt it. More lay persons are involved in actual missions than ever before. Most associations and many churches are sending a steady stream of mission teams to states north and west of us, to Central America, Russia,

Alaska, and Africa.

Brotherhood meetings are beginning to sound like missions meetings with hands-on reports. Creative mission activities are springing up where there is a need. The eleven "critical social issues" mentioned in the above survey were identified as the family, AIDS, abortion, the economy, health care, homosexuality, aging, race relations, drugs/alcohol, crime, and homelessness. Yet we have more church, association, and mission board projects in these areas than ever before. We have awakened to the fact that all of us are in the same boat and mission work is essential if we are to remain afloat. Mission emphases are being altered, but the interest is still there.

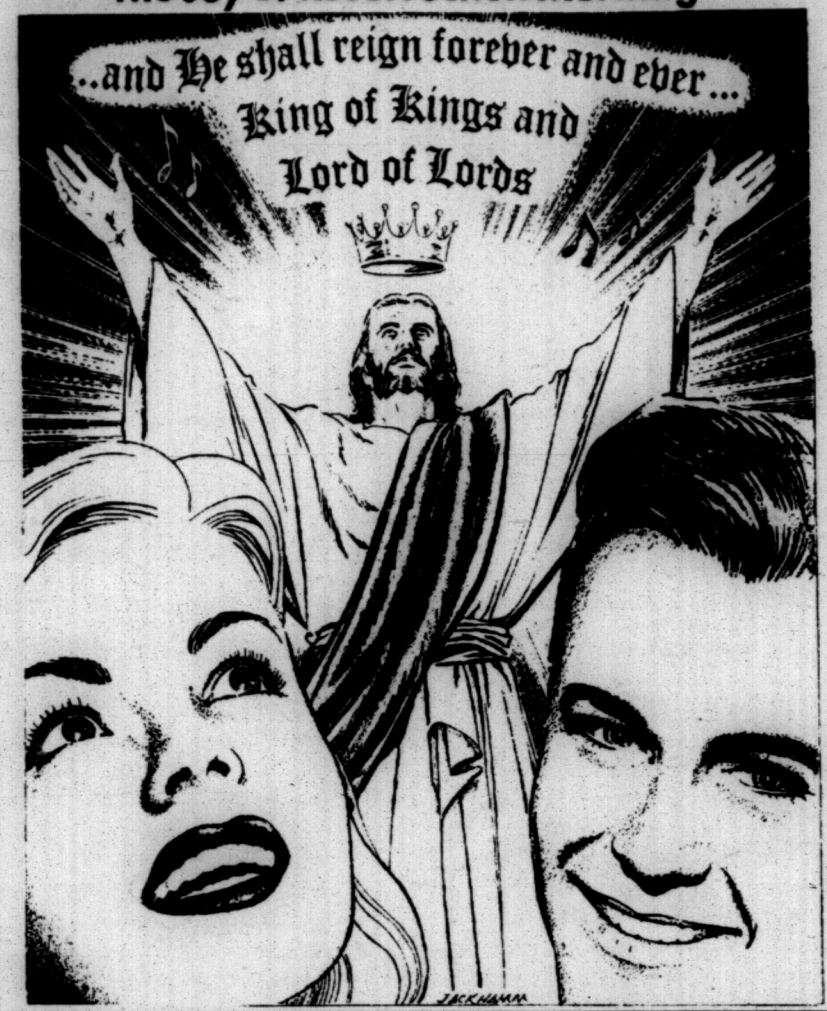
Regular giving through our recognized channels may be down a few percentage points, but this could be caused by economic problems or the fact that funds are being shifted to other mission activities. The Foreign and Home Mission boards are still appointing new missionaries. Money being given through alternate channels is still going to support mission work. One mission group is not

out there fighting another group. They are all involved in spreading the gospel.

In addition, mission interest is rising in other nations. The Baptist World Alliance reported the Naga Indians have a goal to appoint 10,000 missionaries from their population by the year 2000. A first-ever pastors' conference in Rangoon, Myanmar (Burma) had 2,750 present. Some of those had walked for miles to get there. Two hundred evangelists are being trained to take the gospel to every corner of Myanmar. The Seoul Covenant is a pledge of Korean believers to seek to share the gospel with everyone by the year 2000. Increased mission work is being done in the Caribbean, Russia, and thousands of new believers are being added in Africa. The "Jesus" film, being circulated throughout the former Soviet Union, is now translated into 26 European languages and is expected to be seen by 30 million people in the next two years.

It is hard to walk with Jesus and believe his Word and lose interest in his plan for the world to hear the gospel. As Baptists we have our marching orders.

The Joy of Resurrection Morning



The missionary parents

There were many highlights of the WMU state convention in Gulfport, but the luncheon for missionary parents had to be one of the mountaintops.

Some of the parents were middle age and others had hit a lot of potholes along life's highway. Many had visited the fields where their children serve and all of them were knowledgeable about missions, especially furlough schedules.

Most of the talk was about grandchildren and the fact that these precious ones are in Korea, Indonesia, Mongolia, Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, and a dozen other far away places. You learn quickly that important things like a visa, mission meetings, and telephones are on their minds, but not so much as the grandchildren.

Some years ago, before policy prohibited it, we ran a picture of some grandchildren in the Baptist Record. Later on, because of an unusual Mississippi dog's correspondence with then-President

Bush's dog, Millie, we ran a picture of said dog.

Sure enough, it wasn't long in coming — a lady had a picture of the new grandchild and the grand-dog and demanded we print it. She was muttering as she left the room, "Yeah, he ran a picture of his grandchildren plus every stray mutt in town, but just try to get my grandchildren in it!"

Oh boy! The policy still stands.

There is yet more. On March 29 Mrs. Jeff McWhirter (my daughter Angela) of Starkville, gave birth to a fine 9 lbs., 4 ounce lad named Robert Bradley. He bats left and throws right, according to his father, Jeff.

Along with this "by-the-way" announcement, the editor is pleased to announce a "no birth announcement" policy, effective today.

I don't know many, if any, SBC agencies which recognize the missionary's parents except the WMU. They are to be commended for a great job, grandchildren notwithstanding. — GH

Celebrate the resurrection of our Lord, April 11

The World's Greatest News

By Joe T. Odle

Joe T. Odle, former editor of the Baptist Record, was a firm believer in the resurrection. His faith was fixed on the Resurrection and the Life, even after the death of his own son. The following editorial was first published in the April 3, 1969 issue of the Baptist Record.

The greatest news ever proclaimed to the world was the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing else ever announced by science, philosophy, or any other field of knowledge can even begin to compare with it.

What is this news which holds such an important place in the annals of men? It is the simple but glorious truth that Jesus Christ died for our sins and conquered death by rising bodily from the grave. Paul summarizes the gospel when he says, "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day

according to the scriptures; (1 Cor. 15:3-4).

What a message! Glorious in its simplicity: Christ died for our sins; he was buried; he rose again the third day.

More glorious in its meaning: It speaks of Christ, the Son of God, the one who was with the Father back in eternity before the world was, but who, in the fullness of time, laid aside his heavenly garments, took upon him the form of humanity, and came into the world. He came for a purpose, namely, to redeem sinful man, with his own blood, shed as he died on the cross. In that death he did purchase redemption for all men, and because of it God could forgive repentant, believing man, and justify that man, because he had made Christ "to be a sin offering for us."

However, the cross would have been nothing more than a martyr's death, if it had not been followed by the bodily resurrection. By that, Christ was "declared to be the Son

of God with power," and the redemption which he had purchased upon the cross was assured and made complete. We worship a living Christ, who did die for our sins, but also conquered death. Because he lived, we shall live also. Because he conquered death, we can, through him, also conquer it. It is the greatest news of history: "Christ is alive forevermore!"

Anything less than this is no gospel at all... no good news for a sin-cursed world. Men have denied the gospel, sneered at it, scoffed it. They have tried to substitute something else for both the cross and the empty grave. They even have denied that Christ truly is the Son of God. Take away these three great facts, namely, that Christ is the Son of God, that he did die a substitutionary death on the cross, and that he actually came forth bodily from the grave, and you have nothing left. Man preaching such a message are offering only stones to heart-hungry men.

Paul's words are so true: "If

Christ be not risen from the dead, then is our preaching in vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; ...And if Christ be not raised, your faith is in vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and

become the first fruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 15:14-20). Yes, "Now is Christ risen...." This is the good news, the greatest news ever proclaimed. It should be shouted across the world, not only in what the world calls the "Easter" season, but every Lord's day, yes, every day of the year.

Christ the Lord has died for our sins, and is risen today!

Hallelujah!

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Spurgeon retires from FMB; says decisions are political

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Charging that board trustees no longer base their decisions on what's best for global evangelization, Harlan Spurgeon has announced he will retire early as the Foreign Mission Board's vice president for mission personnel.

Spurgeon's retirement will be effective June 30, his 62nd birthday. A 25-year veteran of foreign missions, he is the board's third vice president in the past 15 months to announce early retirement because of disagreements with trustees. Former FMB President R. Keith Parks, who had hoped to remain until 1995, also retired last October under similar circumstances.

Spurgeon, a missionary to Taiwan from 1957-72, oversees departments handling enlistment, selection, and training of new missionaries and volunteers. Also in his portfolio are missionary fur-

lough study, missionary health and board relationships with children of missionaries, former missionaries, and black and ethnic Baptists. He has been in his current role 10 years.

In a March 30 letter to interim board president Don Kammerdiener, Spurgeon said he was "grieved to see controversy and political struggle replace missions and evangelism as the main business of Southern Baptists." He wrote: "It grieves me that the question of 'How will this affect world evangelization?' is no longer the deciding factor in decisions made by our trustees."

Spurgeon said he was especially saddened by the likelihood that Southern Baptists would not reach their Bold Mission Thrust goal of having 5,000 missionaries overseas by A.D. 2000.

Spurgeon, in his letter, wrote, "We have pled with trustees to be

sensitive to the fact that (missionary) candidates would not commit to lifetime service during uncertain times," citing Foreign Mission Board statistics showing a decline in the total missionary force in two of the past four years.

"In theory, our board will still appoint missionaries from the broad spectrum of Southern Baptists. In fact, many young people are convinced either that they cannot be appointed or that they would not be comfortable serving with a board with such a single-minded political agenda," said Spurgeon, adding that the Bold Mission Thrust goal "has become a casualty of the controversy."

From 1988 to 1989 the board's missionary force fell from 3,867 to 3,780, a 2.25% drop. The total climbed 2.19% to 3,863 in 1990 and rose to 3,906 in 1991. However, last year the mission force fell (See **SPURGEON** on page 10)

Greenville inauguration will kick off Mississippi River Ministry projects

The Mississippi River Ministry will be inaugurated April 16-17 in Greenville at a worship service and Gospel Fest/Health Fair, according to Richard Brogan, coordinator of the event and consultant in the Cooperative Missions department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

"In Mississippi, the 22 counties along the Mississippi River will be of focus of ministry projects supported by volunteers, such as health screenings, house weatherization, backyard Bible studies, Vacation Bible School, revivals, drama, recreation, and other concrete ways to demonstrate the care and concern of Christ and his church," Brogan said.

Mississippi River Ministry projects are also being developed in Louisiana, Arkansas, Tennessee, Missouri, Kentucky, and Illinois, Brogan added.

The worship service will be held at 7 p.m. on Friday evening, April 16, at Victory Temple Church at 2700 E. Alexander Street in Greenville. Pastor Eddie Jones will serve as host. Participants will include Fred Loper, a physician who serves as a national mission-

ary in the Church and Community Ministries department at the Home Mission Board in Atlanta; Nathan Porter, field staff consultant for domestic hunger and migrant missions in the Church and Community Ministries department at the Home Mission Board; and Michael F. Thurman, associate director of the Black Church Extension division of the Home Mission Board.

Victory Temple Church will also be dedicated as a center of the Mississippi River ministry.

The Family Life Center of First Church, Greenville, located at 407 Main Street, will host the Gospel Fest/Health Fair on Saturday, April 17, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Health professionals will conduct blood pressure and cholesterol screenings, while Bible displays and books on such topics as health, AIDS, and nutrition will be available.

Sharber and Sally Smith, gospel illusionists and ventriloquists, will

perform at the Gospel Fest/Health Fair. Sharber Smith is pastor of Shady Grove First Church, Heidelberg.

The public is invited, and there is no admission fee. The events are being sponsored by the Cooperative Missions department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, the Black Church Extension division of the Home Mission Board, Victory Temple Church, and First Church, Greenville.

For more information, contact the Cooperative Missions Department, MBCB, at (601) 968-3800.



Loper



Sally and Sharber Smith

State CBF approves mission house funds

By Linda Moore

The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Mississippi approved \$3,600 for one year to provide housing for a CBF missionary planning to furlough in the Starkville area. Members allocated the funds as they adopted a \$15,000 annual budget during their recent meeting in Jackson.

Paul and Margie Thibodeaux, newly-employed CBF missionaries to Eastern Europe, will begin a one-year furlough this summer. Thibodeaux is a former pastor in the Mantee area (1978-82), until his appointment with the Foreign Mission Board. He served with the FMB from 1982 until his appointment with CBF, which he began the first of 1993.

Additional funds approved in the budget included newsletter and

promotional expenses, travel subsidies for four Mississippians serving on the national CBF council, and state conference expenses.

Members elected Jon Doler, pastor of First Church in Leland, to serve as a state representative on the national coordinating council. Doler replaces Joe Tuten of Jackson.

The group adopted a statement of purpose which states: "The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Mississippi is committed to providing a forum for fellowship among like-minded Southern Baptists, to emphasizing an evangelistic message in our society, and to upholding our historic Baptist heritage as we promote the principles of our Baptist fellowship in cooperation with the national body."

Moore lives in Starkville.

SBC March Cooperative Program gifts down 9%

NASHVILLE (BP) — Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program receipts for March were down 8.97% compared to the same month a year ago, according to Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee.

March gifts totaled \$11,148,016 compared to \$12,246,492 in March 1992, or a difference of \$1,098,476. The 1992-93 SBC monthly basic operative budget requirement is \$11,683,366. The current year's SBC Cooperative Program Allocation Budget is \$140,200,395.

The year-to-date totals for the Cooperative Program dropped below last year: \$69,908,521 compared to \$70,200,901, for a \$292,380 difference which is .42%. The SBC fiscal year is Oct. 1 through Sept. 30.

Designated gifts for March, however, were up: \$15,496,772 compared to \$14,704,765 for a difference of \$792,007 or 5.39%. Total designated gifts for the year were still slightly below the previous year: \$80,426,372 compared to \$80,918,178 for a difference of \$491,806 or .61%.

Willard Scott to address ministers' wives luncheon

HOUSTON (BP) — Willard Scott, the weatherman from NBC's "Today" show, will speak at the 1993 Ministers' Wives Luncheon during the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Houston.

Scott is widely known for his weather reports from state fairs, parades, and civic events and his birthday greetings to centenarians. A broadcaster for more than 40 years, Scott first appeared on "Today" in 1980.

The luncheon will be at the

Hyatt Regency Imperial Ballroom Tuesday, June 15, at 12:15 p.m., according to June Honeycutt of Louisville, Ky., president of the ministers wives luncheon.

Tickets ordered by May 20 are \$18 and may be obtained by sending a check and a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the group's recording secretary, Rena Henderson, c/o First Baptist Church, 729 Ocean Blvd., St. Simons Island, GA 31522. After May 20, tickets will be \$20 and may be purchased at the door.

First quarter gifts to CP up from 1992

Mississippi Baptists gave \$1,733,112 through their Cooperative Program in March, according to Bill Causey, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, which distributes the funds.

All monies received are sent to the agencies in a proportion approved by the Mississippi Baptist Convention each year. A total

of 37% of all gifts goes to Southern Baptist causes outside the state.

Cooperative Program gifts for the first three months of 1993 total \$5,607,912. This amount is only \$5,088 less than that needed for a three month period to reach the 1993 budget of \$22,452,000.

And the total for 1993 is \$237,547 more than that given in the same period of 1992.

Plea from Southern Baptist elder statesman —

Hobbs calls for controversy's end at birthplace: Houston

By Herschel H. Hobbs

What I am about to write is not intended as criticism of anyone. But it occurs to me that in the "bubble, bubble, toil, and trouble" of recent years two self-evident things have escaped our notice.

One thought is that from the beginning of Southern Baptist life our churches have appointed messengers, not delegates, to compose Baptist conventions and associational meetings. Delegates are chosen by the churches, instructed how to vote, and the actions taken by the various gatherings are binding upon the local churches which delegated their authority to their delegates.

On the other hand, messengers are not instructed. They go to the meeting, listen to and participate in discussion of the various issues, and then are free to vote their own consciences and judgments. In turn, the actions taken by that body are not binding on local churches or any other separate entity of Southern Baptist life. They are binding only upon the body taking the action.

Now if someone is appointed or elected as a messenger to the Southern Baptist Convention and is instructed by the church, pastor, or anyone else as to how to vote on an issue — and agrees to do as instructed — that person ceases to be a messenger and becomes a delegate. The Southern Baptist Convention does not seat delegates. So that person is not qualified to be seated as a messenger.

Now I do not expect that to be enforced. Unless the person admitted that such was true, there would hardly be a way to know it. I mention it only that it might rest on the conscience of each messenger.

The other thought concerns actions taken by the Southern Baptist Convention and its elected officers. As stated above, such actions are not binding upon the local churches or other Baptist bodies. Those entities may voluntarily agree to abide by them. But that is a decision made by each of these entities — state conventions, district associations, local churches.

But what about the Convention's elected officers? They certainly must act in harmony with the constitution and bylaws. Is this not also true of other actions taken by the Convention? I am thinking of motions, not of resolutions which are nothing more than the consensus of messengers present when they are adopted.

More specifically, I am thinking of the recommendations made in a given report. Even more specifically, I have in mind the report of the Peace Committee. There are

those who say that the Peace Committee failed in that it did not bring peace. Not so. We were not instructed to bring peace. The Convention instructed that committee to determine the source of the controversy, report our findings, and make recommendations. We did just that! (Incidentally, findings are information, not recommendations. They should not be cited as though they are recommendations.)

One of the recommendations was to stop the politics. The contending parties have ignored it.

...As one Southern Baptist, I call on the leaders of the two factions to come together before June 1993 and come to the Convention with a recommendation that we lock hands and hearts as, through unity and diversity, we do together the work God has for us to do.

Another recommendation was to appoint balanced committees and boards. That is the focus of interest at this point.

According to Lee Porter, who supervises the taking of ballots, the Peace Committee's report was adopted by voice vote by a margin of 97 to 3. I cannot imagine the Southern Baptist Convention being nearer to unanimous, especially on so controversial an issue. In my judgment one great factor in it was the messengers saying that they are sick and tired of the controversy and want it to end. It takes two to make a fight, and it takes two to make peace! So it is incumbent upon both parties to work to that end!

But more to the point — the elected officers are to act in accord with Convention action. They are not free to act contrary to it, no matter how worthy are their motives. The Convention has called for balanced committees and boards. In keeping with our polity the elected officers should act accordingly.

If that were done, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship would have no valid reason to exist. Judging by their own statements, I believe that that organization would vanish like smoke in a strong wind. We have the polity that will end this controversy. But we must give it a chance to work!

Three months following Israel's exodus from Egypt she came to Mt. Sinai. There she agreed to a covenant in which she would be a priest-nation to bring pagan nations to worship and serve Jehovah. From Mt. Sinai, God led Israel to Kadesh-barnea in order to lead her into Canaan, the land of her destiny. But there Israel

rebelled. As the result, God said that Israel would wander in the desert wilderness until that generation twenty years and older died.

Eventually, in her wilderness wandering, Israel spent a long time near Mt. Seir, the land of the Edomites. Finally, God said to Moses, "Ye have compassed this mountain long enough: turn you northward" (Deut. 2:3). "Northward" pointed toward Canaan from which Israel was to carry out the covenant.

Two significant things happened at the Southern Baptist Convention in Houston in 1979. One was a giant rally in the Astrodome to launch "Bold Mission Thrust," whose goal was to preach the gospel to everyone on earth by the year 2000. It could have been our finest hour.

But something else also took place at that Convention. The controversy began which has ravaged our Convention fellowship for almost 14 years. Without going into the merits or demerits of the controversy, depending upon which side you are on, I said at the time

that it was the devil's effort to defeat "Bold Mission Thrust," the greatest missionary venture of all time. To do his work the devil would rather use good people than evil people anytime. And the good may become the enemy of the best, the best being "Bold Mission Thrust."

In Houston we came to our Kadesh-barnea. We looked over into our Canaan but rebelled. We refused to enter it. Consequently, we have wandered in the wilderness of controversy for 14 years. In a negative sense, we are biblical. We are like Paul said of the Galatians — like two animals fighting and devouring one another. In this struggle there are no white or black hats. We are all gray. And each side has something good to give the other. Only we are not sharing it.

Recently, a young pastor said to me, "All of my ministry, Southern Baptists have been in controversy.

I am confused and discouraged." His name could be Legion. Of all things, we are even confused as to how to do mission work!

We are now camping about our "Mt. Seir," but in separate camps. Surely God is saying to all of us, "Ye have compassed this mountain long enough: turn you northward." "Northward" points us toward our "Canaan" — a renewed emphasis and effort in missions and evangelism, the very reason for our being.

I am just one Southern Baptist who has and does pray and work for a return of our historic Baptist position: "Unity in Diversity." We are brethren in Christ. The word "brother" translates the Greek *adelphos* which comes from *adelphus* — which means "out of the same womb." We have the same source of salvation and life — God in Christ through the Holy Spirit. We need revival in our hearts. And as Jesus said to Peter, "When thou art converted (changed), strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:32). The old revival text still holds. "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from

Not a single member of the Peace Committee was happy with our report to the Convention. Why? Because no one got everything he/she wanted. In mediation no one ever does. But we were convinced that God had led us to a solution to our problem. In such case, there is but one weakness — the human element — will the people do it?

After the Peace Committee had unanimously adopted its report to the Convention, one of its most conservative members said, "Brother Chairman, if the spirit which has developed in this committee could develop in the Southern Baptist Convention, our problems would be behind us." I agree wholeheartedly!

But, unfortunately, 14 million Southern Baptists cannot sit down for two years and talk and pray themselves together. But the leadership of the two factions can do so for a sufficient time to agree to stay together, work together, and pray together.

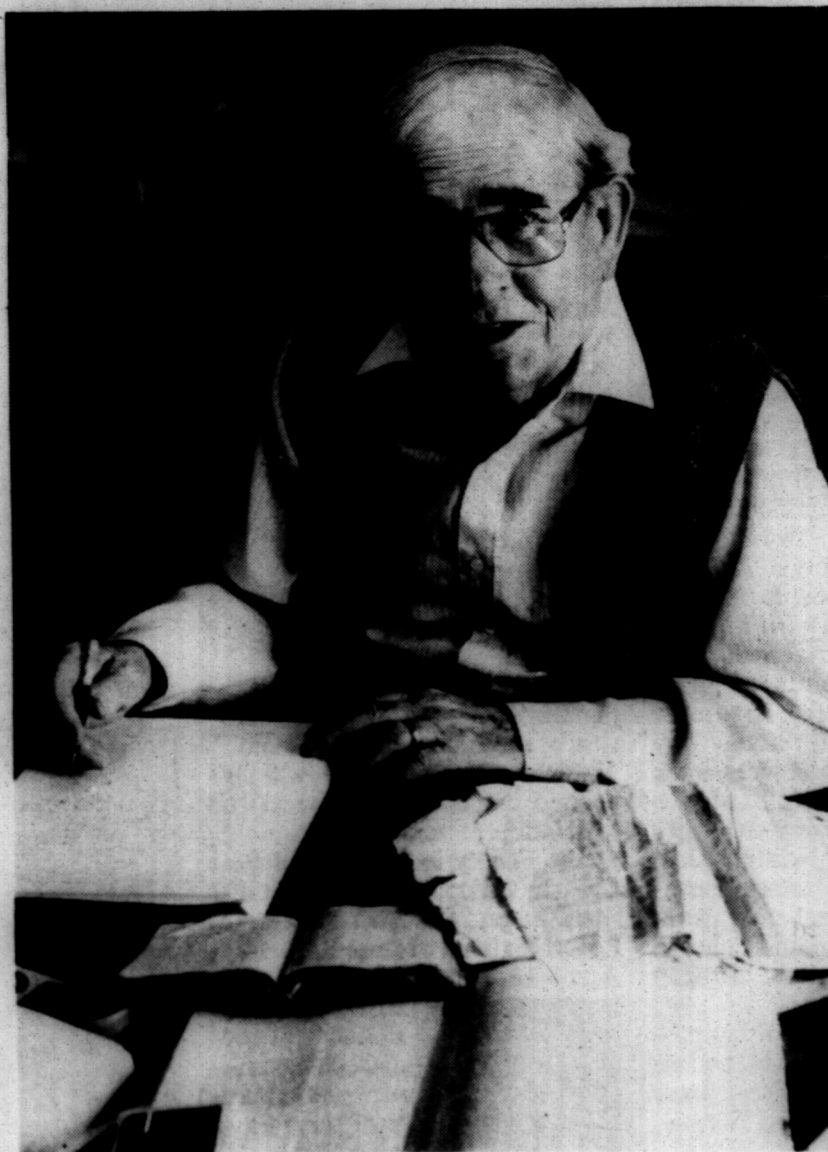
Therefore, as one Southern Baptist, I call on the leaders of the two factions to come together before June 1993 and come to the Convention with a recommendation that we lock hands and hearts as, through unity in diversity, we do together the work God has for us to do. We are fellow-laborers belonging to God.

The controversy began in Houston. Let it end there! We need an entire session in which we transact no business, have no debate: a time when we confess our sins to God and to each other, forgive one another, and pray for God's forgiveness. We need a time when we lay ourselves afresh upon God's altar, dedicating ourselves to "Bold Mission Thrust" for the remaining years before 2000.

If we do, I am certain that we will have a Hal-

lelujah time. And we will shout to the world that we are Christian brethren, dedicated to the cause of Christ in reaching a lost and hurting world!

Hobbs is pastor emeritus, First Church, Oklahoma City, Okla.



Hobbs

their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land (our Southern Baptist Convention)" (2 Chron. 7:14).

Pastors' Conference to focus on America's need for revival

By Art Toalston

HOUSTON (BP) — Nationally syndicated conservative columnist Cal Thomas and Christian family psychologist Gary Smalley will be among the speakers amplifying the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference "...Heal Our Land" theme in Houston.

The annual conference is slated June 13-14 prior to the June 15-17 meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Houston's George R. Brown Convention Center.

The "...Heal Our Land" theme, said Fred Lowery, Pastors' Conference president, is drawn from the Old Testament 2 Chronicles 7:14 passage: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

"We have a moral and spiritual crisis in America today," said Lowery, pastor of First Church in Bossier City, La., explaining the nation is suffering from abortion, homosexuality, "you name it."

"To me, our choices are revival or judgment," Lowery said.

The theme emerged from prayer and discussion with his church staff, Lowery said, recounting that at one point 2 Chronicles 7:14 was mentioned and "I knew that was the direction we needed to go. Somewhere we have to draw the line and say, 'Here we stand.

Regardless.' I don't think there's a greater need than the healing of America."

The conference's initial session, Sunday afternoon, June 13, will be at Houston's Second Church. Subsequent sessions through Monday evening will be at the George R. Brown Convention Center.

Cal Thomas, of suburban Washington, will be among the featured speakers Sunday evening; Gary Smalley, of Phoenix, Ariz., will be among those at the closing session Monday evening.

Mississippi pastor, Ken Alford of Morrison Heights Church in Clinton, will lead the prayer/offering time on Sunday evening.

Among others scheduled to speak are pastors who have not had wide exposure among Southern Baptists, Lowery said, such as Johnny Hunt, pastor of First Church in Woodstock, Ga.; Danny Gray, pastor of Brushy Creek Church in Easley, S.C.; Joe Brown, pastor of Hickory Grove Church in Charlotte, N.C.; Ronnie Floyd, pastor of First Church in Springdale, Ark.; and Michael Hailey, pastor of First Church in Lakeland, Fla.

And there will be speakers "the pastors love to hear over and over," Lowery said, referring to Adrian Rogers, former SBC president and pastor of Bellevue Church in suburban Memphis, Tenn., who will speak during the opening session; Charles Stanley, pastor of First

Church in Atlanta, the conference's closing speaker; and E.V. Hill, pastor of Mt. Zion Missionary Church in Los Angeles.

Evangelists on the program are Jay Strack of Dallas, current SBC first vice president, and Rodney Gage of Euless, Texas, co-chairman of the "reaching children and youth" study group under the SBC-wide self-study initiated by Houston pastor and SBC President Ed Young last fall.

Each speaker has been asked to focus his message on some aspect of the 2 Chronicles 7:14 passage, Lowery said.

Beyond dealing with issues affecting the nation, and how pastors might address them, the speakers also will seek "to encourage and help our pastors as they deal with hurting people," Lowery said, adding, "The path of our society is causing incredible problems in the lives of our people."

Especially helpful to pastors, Lowery said, will be John Maxwell, pastor of Skyline Wesleyan Church in San Diego. Lowery said he heard Maxwell at a conference about a year ago, and "he's the best guy on leadership and encouraging pastors of anybody I've ever heard." Cassette tapes of staff meetings Maxwell leads at his church are circulated to 20,000 pastors, Lowery noted.

Toalston writes for Baptist Press.

Thursday, April 8, 1993

BAPTIST RECORD PAGE 5



Spring evangelism

Southwestern Seminary student Ben Sustar shares the gospel with a man on New Orleans' Canal Street in the French Quarter. Sustar was part of a group of 12 Southwestern students who used their spring break to witness in New Orleans. Students also held revivals across the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico, Great Britain, and a team of students witnessed in Mexico. (SWBTS photo by Mark Christie)

Masons still organizing to attend SBC in Houston

By Art Toalston

NASHVILLE (BP) — Masonic leaders are continuing to urge Masons who belong to Southern Baptist churches to attend the upcoming Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Houston.

They are doing so despite their favorable response to a recommendation adopted by Home Mission Board directors March 17 to be made to the SBC on the issue of Freemasonry's compatibility with Christianity.

"Despite the Board's positive report," John W. Boettjer, managing editor of *The Scottish Rite Journal*, said in a statement after the HMB action, "the danger remains that a small extremist faction within the SBC will manipulate the Convention itself and reverse the Board's year-long study."

"For this reason, the *Scottish Rite* still urges Masons who are Southern Baptists to attend the Convention and to exercise their democratic right to vote for approval of the Board's report," Boettjer said.

The HMB report ends with this recommendation to the SBC focusing on individual conscience in regard to Masonic membership:

"In light of the fact that many tenets and teachings of Freemasonry are not compatible with Christianity and Southern Baptist doctrine, while others are compatible with Christianity and Southern Baptist doctrine, we therefore recommend that consistent with our denomination's deep convictions regarding the priesthood of the believer and the autonomy of the local church, membership in a Masonic Order be a matter of personal conscience. Therefore, we exhort Southern Baptists to prayerfully and carefully evaluate Freemasonry in light of the Lordship of Christ, the teachings of the Scripture, and the findings of this report, as led by the Holy Spirit of God."

Lee Porter, longtime SBC regis-

tration secretary, told Baptist Press April 1 he has received hundreds of phone calls from Southern Baptist laypersons who belong to Masonic lodges inquiring how to become messengers to the SBC meeting.

The Scottish Rite Journal devoted its February issue to the issue of Freemasonry's compatibility with Christianity, especially targeting an SBC study then under way by the HMB's Interfaith Witness Department. The study was assigned to the HMB by messengers at the 1992 SBC annual meeting in Indianapolis.

One writer in the February *Scottish Rite Journal* issue — Fred McPeake, education chairman of the Grand Lodge of Tennessee and a Southern Baptist layman — wrote it is "urgently important" for Masons to attend the 1993 SBC, June 15-17.

The push for Masons to attend the SBC was underscored in a March 1 memorandum from C. Fred Kleinknecht, Washington-based sovereign grand commander of the Supreme Council of the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry Southern Jurisdiction, to "Actives, Deputies, Personal Representatives, Secretaries, Editors of Masonic Publications" across the United States.

Kleinknecht wrote: "It is crucial that Masons who are Southern Baptists become messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention.... If unchecked, the extremist anti-Masonic faction within the Convention could manage a vote condemning Freemasonry. Such a vote would be very harmful to all Freemasons and all Southern Baptists."

Kleinknecht's memo was circulated to Baptist Press and Baptist state papers by James "Larry" Holly, a Beaumont, Texas, physician who initiated the Freemasonry issue at the 1992 SBC in Indianapolis.

Toalston writes for Baptist Press.

The Baptist Seminary in Moscow: The "impossible dream" realized

RUSCHLIKON, Switzerland (EBPS) — The Baptist Seminary in Moscow will hold classes for the first time this fall, commencing Oct. 1, 1993. World Baptists have anxiously awaited this announcement for many years, in fact since the time of the Russian Czars.

"World Baptists began gathering funds for a seminary in Moscow early in this century," said Paul Montacute, director of Baptist World Aid (BWAid), the relief department of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA). This "impossible dream" is about to be realized.

Montacute informed the Baptist Response-Europe (BR-E) committee in March of his visit to Moscow. BR-E is the committee which has coordinated assistance and aid for Eastern Europe since 1990. The Moscow seminary has been listed among the priority interests of BR-E.

In a January meeting in Moscow of the Theological Assistance Group (TAG), Baptist leaders decided the opening of a Moscow Baptist Theological Seminary should be this fall. Delays in obtaining permits and a final decision on location and construction plans have frustrated the opening many times. TAG urged the seminary to use tempo-

rary facilities in the new headquarters building of the Russian Baptist Union in Moscow.

The first class of the seminary is expected to have 20 students. Construction should begin later this year on a purpose-built seminary campus located in the Moscow suburb of Losinka.

Montacute met last week with Baptist leaders of the Euro-asiatic Federation of Unions of Evangelical Christians-Baptists. The leaders projected costs for the temporary accommodation, the building of the Losinka seminary, and further work on the Baptist Theological Seminary already in operation in Odessa, Ukraine.

Funds for the two Baptist seminaries in the CIS—Moscow, Russia, and Odessa, Ukraine—have already been collected from various sources, including the so-called "historical fund" mentioned above, and gifts from the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission

Board, the Board of International Missions of the American Baptist Churches, other churches and individuals. It is believed these amounts will be sufficient for essential building work to be carried out at both locations, as well as providing some help for operating costs for the first year. The seminaries have presented first-year operating budget of just under \$50,000 each.

The opening of the Moscow seminary will be viewed by many Baptists as an answer to prayer. Hopes for its opening have been dashed on many occasions in the past both by government decree and by administrative delays. Added to these have been the immense changes in the former Soviet Union and the major modifications in the structures of Baptist life there.

EBPS is the news agency of the European Baptist Federation, Germany.

Churches adopt the Expanded Annuity Plan

The following churches have adopted the Expanded Annuity Plan since those reported in the March 4 issue of the *Baptist Record*: Hinds-Madison: Faith; Lee: Brewer, Indian Hills, and Temple Grove; Marshall: Coldwater; Rankin: Lake Harbor; and Walthall: Centerville.



Observe Senior Adult Day May 3

GUTHRIE, Ky. — Sara Carneal, left, a member of Guthrie Baptist Church in Guthrie, Ky., visits with Willie Northington at her home. Northington and her husband, Thad, both in their 90s, have been in ill health and unable to attend church regularly. Carneal, also in her 90s, exemplifies the 1993 Senior Adult Day theme "Coping with Crisis in the Senior Years," which emphasizes ways church members can minister to senior adults facing crisis in their lives. Senior Adult Day is set for May 3. Senior Adult Day is sponsored by the discipleship and family development division of the Sunday School Board. (BP photo by Jim Veneman)

Americans uncertain on gays in military

By Mark Wingfield

GLENDAL, Calif. (ABP) — Americans have mixed feelings about gays serving in the military, but Americans who consider themselves evangelical Christians aren't so indecisive.

That's the finding of a new nationwide poll by the Barna Research Group of Glendale, Calif.

The poll, taken through telephone surveys of a representative sample of American adults, was conducted in February.

On the bottom line question of whether the government should maintain its current policy of not allowing acknowledged homosexuals to serve in the military, Americans are nearly evenly divided. Forty-seven percent say they would prefer to keep gays out of the military, while 44% disagree.

Among evangelicals, however, 80% prefer no homosexuals in the military, while only 14% disagree.

Although Americans are divided over this question, they are more certain about other related questions. But these opinions appear to be contradictory.

For example, 57% of Americans believe "acknowledged homosexuals should not be prohibited from serving in the military solely because of their sexual orientation." Only 34% disagree with this statement. And 81% of Americans believe "whether a person is homosexual or not is a private matter that is nobody else's business." Only 15% disagree with that statement.

Yet 55% of Americans believe homosexuality is "immoral," 58% believe allowing gays in the military will make it more difficult for some heterosexual soldiers to concentrate on their job duties, and 68% believe allowing homosexuals in the military will not make the

armed forces more effective.

Further, 48% of Americans say they would not want to serve in the military alongside homosexuals.

That figure is even higher among evangelicals, with 78% saying they wouldn't want to serve alongside homosexuals.

The opinions of evangelicals differ more sharply from the general population on most points of the survey. On average, evangelicals registered resistance to homosexuals by at least 20 to 30 percentage points more than the general population.

For example, while 55% of Americans say homosexuality is "immoral," 92% of evangelicals take that view.

On the question of whether people should be excluded from the military solely on the basis of sexual orientation, evangelicals reflect nearly an exact opposite profile than Americans at large. Sixty percent of evangelicals support this restriction, while 57% of Americans disagree.

Pollster George Barna, president of the Barna Research Group, offered this interpretation of the data: "People are increasingly concerned about the moral condition of the country, and the implications of the shift away from traditional, Judeo-Christian values."

"Very few people in America are homosexual. Most Americans support the right to be a homosexual, theoretically. But when it comes down to interacting with people whose lifestyle they perceive to be immoral, or whose behavior they believe will ultimately lead to cultural decay or lost productivity, they draw the line."

Wingfield is news director, Kentucky WESTERN RECORDER.

Recovering alcoholic uses his experiences to help churches

By Terri Lackey

NASHVILLE (BP) — Johnny Jones is a recovering alcoholic.

That's the first thing he'll tell you when he comes to your church to train members in starting support group ministries.

Jones is project coordinator of LIFE Support resources produced by the Baptist Sunday School Board's Adult Discipleship and Family Development Department. LIFE Support resources provide group support ministry to people suffering from difficulties such as codependency, chemical dependency, abuse recovery, eating disorders, divorce recovery, and grief.

While Jones acknowledges he hasn't had a drink in more than 15 years, he believes he'll be in recovery the rest of his life.

"I don't think you ever get out of recovery," said Jones, who was drinking from two to five fifths of bourbon a week when he prayed to God to take drinking out of his life.

"Because of 16 years of drinking and the emotional and spiritual damage I have done to my life, there are a lot of other issues God started working on then and is still working on today, and I have been in recovery the last 16 years," he said. "You can't drink as long as I did and not do damage spiritually and emotionally."

Jones tells his story because he believes empathy goes a long way in reaching others who are hurting.

Growing up in Thomasville, Ga., Jones said his life was no different than many others who were raised in a Christian home.

"I was raised in a Southern Baptist home," Jones said, noting he attended church regularly with his family. "My family was dysfunctional from the standpoint that there was no emotional nurture. I don't blame my parents. My mother's mother died when she was 4, so she never had a model of how a mother was suppose to be."

"And my father was out of that old era where you shake hands and that's it. They provided for all my physical and material needs; they just didn't know how to meet my emotional needs," he said.

So, while in high school, Jones said he began to look for emotional nurture in other places.

"When we have needs, we are going to go somewhere and get them met. I got them met in my peer group, and my peer group drank."

Jones said he began drinking to ease his emotional pain.

"Alcohol relieves the pain for a short while, but the problem is it takes more and more to ease the emotional pain. When you begin to sober up you have double pain," he said. "One is the emotional aspect begins to come back, and then you've also torn away at your self-esteem because of the drunkenness."

Jones continued to drink through college and after he married.

"In the first four years of my marriage my drinking began to get steadily worse. Finally my wife came to me and said, 'Johnny, I think we need to get in the church.'"

"And I agreed just to get her off my back."

As a school teacher, Jones was free during the summers, and a new youth minister at the church he was

attending asked him to drive the church bus on youth trips. "He didn't know about my drinking problem."

At a Panama City Beach youth conference where he drove the young people one summer, Jones lingered at the door of the worship services "and God began to speak to me."

"On a Thursday night, I walked out of that chapel by myself and I said, 'God, if you'll take drinking out of my life, I'll go anywhere you want me to go, and I'll do anything you want me to do.'"

"And I have not had a desire to drink since."

The difference between that night and the other times Jones promised God, church leaders, and himself he would quit drinking is that "that youth minister said, 'Johnny, if you are going to walk with the Lord, you're going to have to be disciplined.'"

"He took it upon himself to disciple me and to teach me how to get into God's Word, how to have quiet time, and how to grow as a Christian."

Jones then went to seminary, became a pastor for 12 years and then moved to the Sunday School Board where he could use his experience with alcoholism and growing up in a dysfunctional family to help others like him.

"As I go out into conferences, the one thing I emphasize is that if you are going to enlist people in support group ministries, they need to have at least some experience with an addictive or compulsive background."

Lackey writes for BSSB.

APRIL IS ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH

Accept the challenge — Beginning support group ministries

By Terri Lackey

NASHVILLE (BP) — Beginning support group ministries in churches is not a simple and easy task, a project coordinator for the Baptist Sunday School Board said.

"You need to be sure in your church that this is the ministry God has called you to," Johnny Jones told a group attending an orientation in March of the board's LIFE Support materials. LIFE Support resources provide group support ministry to people suffering from difficulties such as codependency, chemical dependency, abuse recovery, eating disorders, divorce recovery, and grief.

Church leaders who take on the task of beginning support groups enter into a complicated ministry, said Jones, LIFE Support project coordinator in the board's adult discipleship and family development department. "When your church enters such a ministry, you create liability problems."

Jones said he was not referring to legal liabilities, but to problems that might be created in the social structure of the church.

Consequently, pastors must lend full support to any type of support group ministry, Jones said. "You can't start this ministry without the pastor being for it."

Jones suggested if a person wants to start the ministry in their church, they should take a copy of the LIFE Support Leader's Handbook, which details how to start support group ministries, and a couple of the LIFE Support courses to the pastor "and lay it out in front of him."

Among the first LIFE Support courses to be offered are helps for low self-esteem, chemical abuse, dysfunctional families, codependency, sexual abuse, and divorce recovery, he said.

Lackey writes for BSSB.

HOUSE TOPS

What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light: and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the housetops. Matthew 10:27 NAS

April 8, 1993

HOUSETOPS is a supplement to the **Baptist Record** and is produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

A WORD FROM ZIMBABWE AND DEWEY MERRITT

What does one do when Mississippi volunteers fail to come as requested by Zimbabwe Baptists? Well, as your coordinators, we begin to look for things that need to be done most urgently. We begin to find our way around in a city of one million people. We visit some of the Baptist churches nearby. We start to learn some of the basics in the Shona language. We discover we have additional time to study and pray. We share fellowship with missionaries and national Baptist leaders. We accept invitations for ministry.

One such invitation took us some 65 miles from Harare to the home village of Rev. Isaac Chigede, the National Convention Coordinator for our partnership. He had desired for many years to have a Baptist church in his home village. Lately he had organized Bible study and prayer in some of the homes in the area. This was to be the big Sunday. He had announced to the people that he and the Merritts would be coming for the first public service. The women sat on the ground and the men sat on large rocks as choruses and hymns were sung. I preached a simple gospel message interpreted by Pastor Chigede. Twenty-eight adults openly professed faith in Jesus Christ, including Pastor Chigede's older brother. Packages of helps for new Christians, used in the partnership, were given to each new convert. A leader was designated to help them. As we were leaving in the Mississippi-provided van, Pastor Chigede looked at us, clapped his hands with joy and exclaimed, "Ah, today a church was born in my village." He plans to meet with these new Christians three times this week to prepare them for baptism, being sure that they understand the basics of being a Christian.

We went immediately to a village church some 15 miles further from the main road. It was begun by Southern Baptists' first missionary in this area, Clyde Dotson, and is the only Baptist church in that area. About 150 people had walked various distances to be present and were happily singing, awaiting our arrival. I preached another gospel message and eight young adults accepted Christ. The next day Rev. Chigede called to thank us for our help and told us that an elderly, faithful lady in the church had died and he had been asked to conduct the funeral. I felt led to go with him. We stopped to speak to his sister and brother near the village where the 28 had responded to Christ the previous Sunday. As we were waiting, Chigede's cousin approached us and Chigede turned to me and said, "For a long time I have longed for my

cousin to become a Christian." I shared the message of salvation with Chigede's cousin and after we talked with him some 15 minutes, he openly accepted Christ.

Zimbabwe Baptists have prayerfully and carefully selected many places that need new congregations. These towns and villages are awaiting volunteers from Mississippi to join with Baptists here to bring Christ to them. I hope this year we will be able to say many times, "Today a new church was born!" □

My Sunday School teacher thought HOUSETOPS was just for church staff, 'til he saw where there's going to be a conference to help him teach kids.



See "Bridging Life's Span..." inside page HOUSETOPS.

10th Annual MEDICAL-DENTAL FELLOWSHIP Meeting

BM/DF

May 7-8, 1993

FBC, Jackson
beginning at
6 p.m.



COST
\$10.00

BANQUET
Friday Night



GUEST SPEAKERS

Earl Hewitt, Jr. (left) - medical missionary to Ghana
Bill Swan (right) - medical missionary to Macao

For all Medical and Dental professionals
see registration on back of HOUSETOPS



**BAPTIST NURSING
FELLOWSHIP**
is making a **PLUG**
for Camp Nurses needed
during
**GA& Acteens
Camps
at Garaywa**

PLUG IN...IF YOU CAN!!

Give a week or more of your summer to be camp nurse. For more details, call Ashley McCaleb at 968-3800, ext 3924.

Or write her at Woman's
Missionary Union, P.O. Box 530,
Jackson, MS 39205

1993 CAMP SCHEDULE

June 2-4	GA Mini-Camp; Camp Garaywa
June 7-11	GA Camp; Camp Garaywa
June 14-18	GA Camp; Camp Garaywa
June 14-16	Acteens Mini-Camp, Central Hills
June 16-18	Acteens Mini-Camp, Central Hills
June 28-30	Acteens Mini-Camp, Garaywa
June 21-25	GA Camp; Camp Garaywa
June 20-July 2	GA Mini-Camp; Camp Garaywa
July 5-9	GA Camp; Camp Garaywa
July 9-10	1st & 2nd grade Mother/Daughter Overnight; Camp Garaywa
July 12-16	GA Camp; Camp Garaywa
July 19-23	GA Camp; Camp Garaywa
July 26-30	GA Camp; Camp Garaywa

PRAYERGRAM

March 25-April 8, 1993

PRAY for Don and Anne Dent, missionaries to Indonesia. They make four requests: (1) The ability to learn the Sudanese language (2) That they will grow in their love toward the Sudanese people (3) That they will have wisdom in developing effective strategies for their mission work (4) For the power of the Holy Spirit in their daily lives. Don is the son of Mrs. Pattie Dent of Clinton.

PRAY for Joel and Rhonda Sutton and the missionaries who live and work in France. Joel Sutton writes, "The great majority of French people do not own a Bible. Pray for four families in the small town of Besse, who have requested the gospel of Luke. Pray that they will come to know Jesus as their Savior.

PRAY that a national Christian will be called out to become literacy supervisor in the Liberian area of Daloo (West Africa) This worker would promote and coordinate a literacy campaign in the Bete (pronounced bay-tay) dialect of the region.

PRAY for missionaries, pastors and Christian people who seek to witness in Utah. 71 percent of Utah's residents are Mormons and less than 1 percent are Southern Baptists. "In Utah being a Mormon is more than a religion. It is a culture; a way of life", says Lavid Robertson, home missionary and retired director of evangelism for Utah-Idaho.

PRAY that Baptists will be aware of and supportive of the AID PROGRAM of the Baptist World Alliance. Right now blankets and medical supplies are being sent to Bosnia. Those who desire to contribute to this ministry should do so through: Baptist World Alliance, 8733 Curran Bt. McLean, Va. 22101-8055.

PRAY for Edna M. Ellison, former editor of ROYAL SERVICE of WMU, SBC, who was elected by the California Southern Baptist Convention on Jan. 28 to serve as WMU/women's ministry director.

PRAY that though the lottery bill seems to be dead at this time that Citizen Christians will not in any way have a spirit of apathy, as they face the strong likelihood that proposals to create a lottery will arise again.

PRAY for the Bivocational Ministers' Retreat to be held at Lake Tiak O'Khata, Louisville, Miss., March 19 and 20, 1993. This is a statewide event and is very important in Miss. Baptist life.

PRAY for Gulfshore and Central Hills as they seek summer staffers. Gulfshore Assembly begins its summer program on May 15 and ends Aug 7. Central Hills begins staff orientation June 6 and the final work day will be Aug. 8. If interested, write to Summer Employment, Gulfshore Baptist Assembly, 100 First St., Pass Christian, Ms. 38571 3299 or Central Hills Baptist Retreat, P.O. Box 723, Kosciusko, Ms.

PRAY for Bobbie Wade, a nurse of the Bentonia Baptist Church, who left for Somalia on March 1, for a two-month volunteer ministry. She is paying her own way to work in pre- and post-natal care and also on the Food Line. Such workers are required to return to Nairobi, Kenya every four weeks for a time of rest. □

ANNUAL MEDICAL- DENTAL FELLOWSHIP MEETING

Dr. Ben Nash, President of the Mississippi Baptist Medical Dental Fellowship invites Health Care Givers to the 10th Annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Medical-Dental Fellowship scheduled for First Baptist Church, Jackson on May 7-8, 1993. The meeting will begin on Friday at 6 p.m. with a fellowship period and a banquet to follow in Fellowship Hall West. Activities on Saturday morning begin with a Continental Breakfast at 8 a.m. in the Chapel of the Baptist Building located at 515 Mississippi Street.

The Friday night banquet program will feature two Southern Baptist foreign missionaries. Dr. William Swan, a native of Pryor, Oklahoma, is a medical missionary to Macao. His work as a foreign missionary physician involves ministry through medical care using the out-patient clinic as well as going out into the community taking care of the sick in their own homes.

Another program feature on Friday night will be Dr. Earl Hewitt. He is a Southern Baptist missionary physician appointed to Ghana in 1988. Dr. Hewitt, Jr. is a native of McComb. His father is a physician in this city. As a medical missionary, Dr. Hewitt is on the staff at the Baptist Medical Center in Nalerigu, Ghana.

Other aspects of the Friday night program will include inspirational music, project reports and testimonies.

Saturday morning will feature a presentation on partnership missions by Bill Hardy, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, and a dialogue panel. Dr. Lee Cope, a Jackson pedodontist, will moderate the panel. The panel will focus on such areas as medical mis-

sions, Dr. William Swan; dental missions; Dr. Bob Holifield; mission clinics; Dr. Bill Boteler and Dr. Paul VanLandingham; and projects for nurses, Miss Kaye Wilson.

The annual meeting includes physicians, dentists, residents, medical and dental students, optometrists, pharmacists, and nurses. We welcome anyone interested in this area of mission work. Cost for the banquet meal is \$10 per person. Advanced reservations are required by April 30, 1993. To secure a reservation, send \$10 per person to the Brotherhood Department, PO Box 530, Jackson, MS, 39205. For further information call the Brotherhood Department 968-3800. □



"Bridging Life's Span... Focus on the Future"

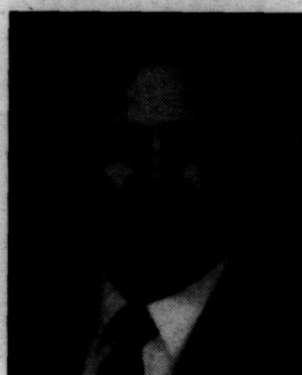
A conference for reaching and teaching
Mississippi's future generations.

September 10-11, 1993
First Baptist Church, Jackson

Open to pastors, staff and all age leadership.

Sunday School Department, MBCB

CHAPLAINS SPRING RETREAT



Nathan Barber, pastor of the Immanuel Baptist Church in Hattiesburg will lead the Bible studies.

Chaplains should make reservations through the Cooperative Missions Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, Richard Brogan, Consultant. □

The Mississippi Baptist Chaplains' Association will conduct its annual Spring Retreat at Gulfshore Baptist Assembly on May 14-15.

Paul Stephenson, Director, Pastoral Care Department of the Mississippi Baptist Medical Center, will speak on the subject, "Looking at Hurt and Loss."



GospelFest/ Health Fair

A GospelFest/Health Fair is scheduled for Saturday, April 17, at the Family Life Center of First Baptist Church, 407 Main Street, Greenville, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Churches will be invited to present musical selections and then attend the Health Fair. Screenings will be conducted by student nurses of Mississippi College and other health professionals will offer examinations.

The GospelFest/Health Fair is a Kick-Off Event of the Mississippi River Ministry (a seven state focus) in Mississippi. On Friday evening, April 16, at 7 p.m., a celebration and dedication service will be held at Victory Temple Baptist Church, 2700 East Alexander Street, Greenville.

During that event the Victory Temple Church will be dedicated as a Center for the Mississippi River Ministry. According to Richard Brogan, consultant in the Cooperative Missions Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, mission volunteers from Mississippi and the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention are expected to respond in meeting human needs in the name of Christ. □

ALASKA PARTNERSHIP REQUESTS

LaVerne Griffin Youth Recreation Camp (near Anchorage)

Need an individual or couple to serve as resident Camp Manager/Caretaker for one year. Will provide housing. Contact Rich O'Guin, 18719 N. Lowrie Loop, Eagle River, AK 99577. Office phone 907/257-2640 or home 907/694-5853.

First Baptist Church, Eagle River, Alaska

Need a work team of 8-12 people with basic carpentry, plumbing and electrical skills to help with remodeling of church building. Need for 1-2 weeks during summer of 1993. Church will provide meals and housing.

Contact Archie Boyles, P.O. Box 770136, Eagle River, AK 99577. Phone 907/694-2504.

Inquiries should be made to the Partnership Missions Office, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205. Telephone: 601/968-3800. □

Area Bivo Meetings

AREA 1

April 23, 1993, FBC, Senatobia 6:30 p.m.,
Meal 7:30-8:45 p.m., Conference

AREA 2

April 24, 1993, Prentiss Association Office
8:00 a.m., Meal 9:00-11:00 a.m., Conference

AREA 4

May 15, 1993, Traceway. Mathiston 8:00 a.m.,
Meal 9:00-11:00 a.m., Conference

AREA 8

May 21, 1993, Western Sizzlin, Hattiesburg
6:30 p.m., Meal 7:30-8:45 p.m., Conference

BREAK THROUGH SERVE TO WIN GULFSHORE BAPTIST ASSEMBLY

Sunday School's July weekends are filled with ideas for reaching out to bring people into the warm and caring relationship of a Sunday School group.

July 22-24, 1993

WORSHIP LEADER

Chuck Kelley
Professor of Evangelism
New Orleans Baptist
Theological Seminary



July 29-31, 1993

WORSHIP LEADER

Bert Harper
Pastor
West Jackson Street,
Tupelo



Challenging ideas for sharing the good news through Bible teaching and personal witnessing will be provided. Brochures are available through the Sunday School Department giving conference leaders and conference titles. Bible study for preschool, children, and youth will be provided while adults are in leadership conferences.

MISSIONSTROLL

**Baptist Women/
Baptist Young Women Retreat at Camp Garaywa**

On Feb. 26 and 27 approximately 285 women from all areas of the state participated in the Retreat Camp.

MissionStroll, part of Friday evening's session, gave women first-hand information from those involved in volunteer and career missions.

1. Furloughing missionary, Peggy Wallace, in national dress (left), describes her role as homemaker and teacher in Cajamarca, Peru, where she and husband, Karl, and their two teenagers live and serve. Home churches are Broadmoor and Briarwood (Jackson), respectively.

2. Laverne Barnes, Jackson, retired nurse and member of Baptist Nursing Fellowship, is active in volunteering her skills. She served on medical teams to Kazakhstan and Brazil last year.

3. Gail Benedict, of Purvis, shows how to set up an effective Crisis Closet Ministry in the association or church. Let's Do Missions, her focus, included numerous ministry models.

4. Why not give a week or two to serve in Rio Grande River Ministry along the Texas border? Two members of a team of student nurses from Mississippi College who did last summer are Denise Windom and Kay Travis, Crystal Springs.

5. "Alaska, our newest Partner in Missions is the place to go," says Louise Perrigin, of Ackerman. Opportunities are boundless!

6. "Let me tell you about Zimbabwe!" Linda Donnell, of Hattiesburg, convincingly details needs women can meet in our partner country.



1



4



2



5



3



6

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WORKSHOPS

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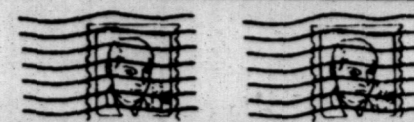
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HOUSE OF

Letters to the editor



Ukraine evangelists

Editor:

God is giving a spiritual harvest of souls in Russia and the new republics of the old Soviet Union, especially the Ukraine!

Last August, 10 teams of 50 people from 12 states, several from Mississippi, accompanied me to Donetsk, Ukraine. The team members preached, sang, testified, distributed Bibles, and witnessed in a dozen cities in church services, street and park services, hospitals, army camps, street witnessing, and three nights of services in the Sports Palace in Donetsk! Thousands of people heard the gospel for the first time. The churches and crusade leaders reported that 12,534 people responded to the public and personal invitations to receive Christ. The team members distributed over 40,000 Bibles, New Testaments, and gospels of John in the Ukraine, Moscow, and St. Petersburg.

The Baptist leaders of the Ukraine have invited me to bring teams again this summer. To meet their requests we need preachers, vocalists, singing groups, and personal witnesses to respond to the challenging invitation. The door is open now to the gospel, and the Ukrainian people are the most responsive I've seen! For information, call me at (407) 843-8433.

One of our pastors stopped on a street corner with his team, formed a circle, sang a song, and testified

while people gathered. He preached and gave an invitation, repeated over and over for four hours — and people kept responding!

Team members are needed this summer to step with us through the open door in this Foreign Mission Board/Ukraine Baptist Union evangelistic project.

Jim Ponder
Orlando, Fla.

Clear up confusion

Editor:

I am deeply saddened by all the misinformation, innuendo, and distrust which is circulating about WMU. Woman's Missionary Union: 1. is committed to missions through all possible means; 2. took no action to lessen our commitment to Southern Baptist mission nor to add to our prayer calendar and curriculum materials; 3. took no action to move WMU closer to any Baptist group. However, at a group's request, WMU will pray for them and consider publishing and selling printed resources to them. WMU also: 4. affirmed its long-standing practice of selling Christian missions education materials to non-SBC groups who share similar missions concerns; 5. has not in the past and will not appoint missionaries or distribute mission funds to any Southern Baptist or non-Southern Baptist board or organization (since we collect no mission funds, we have no mission funds to distribute — all non-local Cooperative Program funds go directly to the state conventions, where they are distributed as each state convention decides!).

Woman's Missionary Union receives no funds directly from the Southern Baptist Convention, but supports itself by publishing and selling missions materials.

If WMU has been guilty of anything, it is in using business terms when small words would have been clearer. I deeply regret the misunderstanding and confusion which

has occurred among some of our pastors, board members, lay people, and especially our missionaries. Dear missionaries, don't despair! WMU has not abandoned you! Just read our alongside motto: "You don't work alone... we're right alongside you... and lo, he is with us always."

Betty Padgett, WMU director
Roseland Park Church
Picayune

Christian founding

Editor:

We certainly agree with J. Brent Walker that America today is not a "Christian Nation," with some divine covenant or mandate as a "theocracy," even though Christianity is easily the leading "religion" embraced by millions in our nation. We are sending, and have sent, more missionaries by far to reach the world than all other nations put together.

Nevertheless, consider this: The 1620 Mayflower Compact states that they were establishing the first colony for the "advancement of the Christian faith," NOT religion in general. As Patrick Henry said, "It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians, not on religions, but on the gospel of Jesus Christ! For this very reason peoples of other faiths have been afforded asylum, prosperity, and freedom of worship here." (Try this in a Muslim nation!)

One hundred six of the first 108 colleges in America were founded by Christians to train ministers, as well as others, to read and understand the Bible for themselves, schools such as Harvard, Yale, Princeton, etc. The McGuffey reader, virtually a Christian textbook, was the tool used to teach reading in America for about 200 years.

The Supreme Court ruled in 1898, in the case of the Holy Trinity v. U.S.: "...This is a Christian Nation!" These nine men were in possession of masses of evidence, and totally contradict the statements of J. Brent Walker, that this was not, at first, a Christian nation, founded primarily by Christians, for Christians, but with freedom of

worship. Our early Baptists fought primarily against government interference, state mandated churches or denominations, which some colonies were leaning toward.

So our founders wanted a Christian nation, where men could be rescued from their sins, and from all other religions, past, present, and future, because they were and are false, and they lead their followers to eternal damnation. They were gracious enough however, and scriptural enough, to give unparalleled freedom of worship to those who differed, and to leave them freedom of choice.

I do not know J. Brent Walker, but I believe him to be a fine man and a Christian. I would recommend reading everything he has to say on the subject, but also recommend reading as a balancer, *The Myth of Separation*, by David Barton, P.O. Box 397, Aledo, TX 76008.

Floyd C. McElveen
Petal

Mission in Belarus

Editor:

As I look out through my window at the new fallen snow I find myself still overwhelmed by the realization that we are here in the heart of Belarus, speaking Russian, involved in the life of the Belarussian Baptist Church.

The work here is overwhelming! Or maybe I should say that the opportunities are more than we can get to. I have preached in many churches, evangelistic meetings, and special gathering. The hunger for the Word of the Lord is unbelievable. Here in the homeland of communism people are seeking the Lord everywhere. Two weeks ago I preached in an evangelistic meeting in a city two hours away from Minsk. Out of a crowd of 500 almost 200 expressed a strong interest in knowing more about God and all received a New Testament.

Pray for increased gifts to the Cooperative Program. The CP is still the financial lifeline that we depend on for all of our resources for ministry in Belarus.

Furlough time is just around the corner. We hope to be home around

the end of May and will have a full year at home. My "international" taste buds are ready for some good ole turnip greens, fried okra, sliced tomatoes fresh from the garden, and, of course, a heaping platter of fried Mississippi catfish. We can't wait!

Dan and Libby Panter
Minsk, Belarus

Tribute to Tyler

Editor:

Thank you so much for the beautiful item on Mrs. Francis Tyler. Everything you said and much more was true about this dear lady.

I entered Blue Mountain (1970-74) at a time when some there did not fancy the idea of having men students on campus. Mrs. Tyler was my first instructor of the four years and the first class of each day. Mrs. Tyler had a way of showing all the students, even men students, that they were important to the kingdom of God and she showed no partiality to her students, neither men nor women.

It was a delight, after having travelled almost 100 miles to get to school, to see her warm radiant smiling face. Her first words, regardless of whether it was raining or sun shining, were: "Isn't it a beautiful day?" She always liked the cool mornings when the sun was shining.

Although I did not have her as an instructor after the first year, she remained interested in me. Many times she would come up to me in the hall or in the "sub" and say, "Mr. McMillen (or Ken), how are you doing?" She was thrilled that I, being 36 years of age, was able to complete school in four years and get my degree.

She will always hold a special place in my heart and life. She continued to follow my life, even after school, with great interest, as she did all her students.

I know she is really beaming now in heaven, and we all miss her.

Ken McMillen, DOM
Riverside Baptist Association
Livingston, Tenn.

Raymond R. Gordon dies

Raymond R. Gordon, 86, a retired Baptist minister, died of kidney failure March 25 in Laurel.

Service were held March 27 at Bethlehem Church, Laurel, where Gordon was a member.

Gordon surrendered to preach at age 45, and pastored Centerville Church, Pine Street Mission in Laurel, New Sardis Church, and Clear Springs Church, in addition to serving as interim at various Jones County congregations.

Gordon was a graduate of Clarke College.

He is survived by his wife, Melrose, two sons, two daughters, four brothers, a sister, 14 grandchildren, 21 great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild.

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Just for the Record



Scotland Church, Winona, held its first GA/Acteens recognition service last fall. The theme was "Pilgrimage of Praise." GAs, (top picture), back row, from left, are Ališa Kirk, Amy Pearson, Jennifer Worsham, Lacey Branch, Laura Carpenter; front row, Jodie Kirk, Alison Thompson, Jessica Worsham, and Ashley Miller. Lisa Branch is GA leader. Acteens (pictured at bottom) from left, are Ruth Oliver, Beth Waller, and Beth McCorkle. The Acteens leader is Tammie Worsham. Mark Worsham is pastor.



Arbor Grove Church, Houston, recently held a recognition service honoring its GAs. This year they took a trip to Camp Garaywa with a program entitled "Love as God Loves." Pictured, back row, from left, are Kermit Brann, interim pastor, Scotty Gann, GA helper, Kristie Holloway; front row: Laci Carol Woods, Serena Gann, Misty Whitt, Melissa Roberts, Kayla Holloway, Martha Whitt, GA director, and Jackie Verell, WMU director.

Revival Results

Oral, Sumrall: March 21-24; George G. Aultman, Hattiesburg, evangelist; Brad Griffin, Petal, music; Thomas J. McCormick, pastor; one profession of faith, 10 rededications, and seven by letter.

Ruth Church, Lincoln Association, will host a blood drive on Saturday, April 10, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. The drive will benefit Susan Halford, the daughter of Freddie and Yvonne Miller, members of Ruth Church. Mrs. Halford had brain surgery and emergency cesarean section on March 25 at University Medical Center, Jackson. For further information, call Alice Wooley at 734-6447.

A Son Rise Service will be held at Pleasant Ridge Church, Sturgis, on April 11 at 6:30 a.m. Other activities include breakfast in fellowship hall and Sunday School. Larry Haggard is pastor.

The celebration choir of Castlewoods Church, Brandon, will present the Easter musical "I Am" on Saturday, April 10 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, April 11 at 11 a.m. The musical will be directed by Al Carden, minister of music. Larry McDonald is pastor.

The annual production of "The Living Last Supper" will be presented at Clarksdale Church, Clarksdale, on April 8 and 9 at 7 p.m. Hugh Pluckett is minister of music. Carl M. White is pastor.

Revival Dates

Noxapater (Winston): April 11-14; Sunday, regular times; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Paul Blanchard, director of missions for Winston Association, evangelist; William Smith, Noxapater, music; Wayne Sanders, pastor.

First, Yazoo City: "A Family Reunion" April 11-14; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.; R. David Raddin, pastor, First, Yazoo City, evangelist; R.L. and Beth Sigrest, Yazoo City, music.

Springdale (Tippah): April 14-18; services, 7 nightly; John Bomar, pastor, Brookside, Memphis, evangelist; Shawn Davis, Pleasant Ridge, Union County, music; New Dimension, Blue Mountain College, Pleasant Ridge Trio, special music; Maurice Pinkston, pastor.

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Pro-lifers decry Clinton's plan to kill funding ban

WASHINGTON (BP) — The White House's intention to rescind a 16-year ban on Medicaid funding for abortion ignited another skirmish in the ongoing war over abortion.

President Clinton's plan to repeal the Hyde Amendment will result in more abortions and in pro-life Americans being forced to pay for the taking of unborn life, abortion opponents said. The proposed action will end unfairness to poor women who cannot afford to exercise their reproductive rights, abortion rights advocates said.

News of Clinton's intention to keep a campaign promise to rescind the Hyde Amendment came a week before his budget was to be submitted the first full week of April. The White House confirmed March 30 the Hyde Amendment would not be included in the budget.

"President Clinton has once more demonstrated his commitment to choice and the dignity of women by calling for an end to the callous and discriminatory government policies that deny the right to choose abortion to low-income women, particularly

minority women," said Kate Michelman, president of the National Abortion Rights Action League, in a written statement. "This kind of coercive policy has no place in a nation that values individual rights and liberties."

"For a politician who says his abortion policy is meant to decrease the number of abortions in America, he has a strange way of showing it," said James A. Smith, director of government relations for the Christian Life Commission.

Medicaid paid for about 300,000 abortions a year prior to the Hyde Amendment's adoption. In 1990, only 69 abortions were paid for by Medicaid under the Hyde guidelines.

"It's bad enough for abortion to be legal in the first place," the CLC's Smith said. "However, forcing pro-life Americans to pay for this reprehensible practice with their taxes is unconscionable. Thomas Jefferson called this type of policy sinful and tyrannical."

"I'm still waiting for this president to say no to the abortion lobby. He hasn't said no yet, and he doesn't show any signs of doing so in the future."

Medical Center schedules Holy Week Easter programs

Mississippi Baptist Medical Center will host special Easter programs during Holy Week (April 5-9).

Chaplain is presenting a 30-minute program in the medical center's chapel at noon each day through Thursday, April 8.

On Good Friday, April 9, guest speakers from local churches will deliver a message on "The Seven Last Sayings of Jesus" in Busey Auditorium on the lower level of the medical center. Thirty-minute services will start on the hour, beginning at 9 a.m. and concluding at 3 p.m.

Each service will have a different speaker, including Bill Fuller of Woodland Hills Church, Jackson; James Street of Calvary Church, Jackson; Carl Prewitt of First Church, Byram; David Merritt of Briarwood Drive Church, Jackson; Bill Hurt of First Church, Canton; S.M. Henriques Jr. of Hillcrest Church, Jackson; and Steve Jordan of Pocahontas Church, Pocahontas.

The public is invited. For more information, call the medical center's Pastoral Care department at (601) 968-5146.



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Names in the News

Walnut Grove Church, Walnut Grove, ordained its new pastor, **John H. Pace Jr.**, to the ministry on Feb. 28. John H. Pace Sr., father of the ordination candidate, preached the ordination sermon. He is a member of Reeds Church, Lexington, N.C.

Donald Riley, a member of Bunker Hill Church in Marion County, is available for pastorate, interim, supply, and revivals. He received his education at Clarke College and William Carey College. He has pastored churches in Webster, Choctaw, Scott, Attala, Holmes, and Covington counties. Riley may be reached at 513 Riley Road, Columbia, MS 39429, or call 736-6535.

John Williams, pastor of Durant Church, Durant, was given a certificate of merit for his recent publication, **Black Baptists in Mississippi: A Historical Perspective**.

Richard Brogan, consultant for black church relations, Cooperative Missions Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, presented the certificate to Williams. The publication, according to Brogan, helps to span the informational gap about the work of National Baptists in Mississippi. Williams attended New Orleans Seminary and is a graduate of Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson.

Wilbur Wallace Swartz, professor emeritus of preaching, New Orleans Seminary, will be the guest speaker at the Area VII Senior Adult Rally to be held at Liberty Church, Liberty, on April 15. Registration will begin at 9:30 a.m. Swartz joined the seminary faculty in 1951 and retired in 1980.

BWA's Lotz warns against individualistic strategy

BERLIN (BP) — "When independent type thinking comes not only to Baptist individuals, but to each level of Baptist unity, lack of cooperation, re-duplication of efforts, and even conflict occurs," said Denton Lotz, Baptist World Alliance general secretary.

Lotz spoke on the need for cooperation and partnership among Baptists, and of the implications of an individualistic mission approach for Baptists, at a March 25-28 church growth conference sponsored by the Union of Evangelical Free Churches in Germany.

"Are we experiencing a paradigm shift in mission?" Lotz asked.

"If the answer is yes," Lotz said, "we need a serious reconsideration

across the board as to how we as Baptists do missions and understand the church.

"While every Baptist entity from the individual to the international level has the responsibility and right to do mission and evangelism," Lotz said, "certain principles of cooperation have developed over the years which have led Baptists to agree that cooperative efforts are best suited for truly reaching the whole community, nation and world."

"However," Lotz said, "you cannot force any Baptist congregation to conform to a particular way of action."

"This is a strength," Lotz said, "because it puts responsibility to witness rightly in the hands of the individual believers."

"On the other hand, it is our weakness," Lotz said, "because if everyone goes off and does 'their own thing' unity and cooperation often become impossible, or at least more complicated."

While not recommending Baptists change their belief in the autonomy of the local church, Lotz said that very autonomy necessitated meetings such as the Berlin meeting, "to pray, think, study, consult, and agree on cooperative action."

Thursday, April 8, 1993

BAPTIST RECORD PAGE 9

Miss. BSU elects 1993 officer slate; summer missionaries commissioned

By William H. Perkins Jr.

More than 500 Baptist Student Union (BSU) members from campuses across Mississippi gathered March 26-28 for the Leadership Training Conference at Gulfshore Baptist Assembly in Pass Christian.

The students elected statewide officers and commissioned 67 students who will serve as 1993 summer missionaries in 17 states and seven foreign countries.

BSU state officers for 1993-94 are Jamie Justice of Eupora, Mississippi College junior, president; Chris Towles of Gulfport, Gulf Coast Community College/Jeff Davis Campus sophomore, vice-president; Kathryn Clayton of Clinton, Mississippi State University junior, secretary; Becky Courtney of Crystal Springs, Delta State University senior, executive committee member; Jake Roudkovski of Ecu, Blue Mountain College junior, executive committee member; Kim Prime of Gautier, Gulf Coast Community College/Jackson County campus freshman, executive committee member; Daniel Browning, assistant professor of religion at William Carey College in Hattiesburg, faculty advisor; James Lewis, pastor of 15th Avenue Church in Meridian, pastor advisor; and Jeff Powell, BSU director at Hinds Community College, director advisor.

Lewis

The summer missionaries and



New-elected BSU leaders and the schools they attend are (back row, from left) Chris Towles, vice-president, Gulf Coast Community College; Jeff Powell, director-advisor, Hinds Community College BSU director; (front row, from left) Kim Prime, executive committee member, Gulf Coast Community College; Kathryn Clayton, secretary, Mississippi State University; Jamie Justice, president, Mississippi College; Becky Courtney, executive committee member, Delta State University; Jake Roudkovski, executive committee member, Blue Mountain College. (Photos by William H. Perkins Jr.)

their parents heard Jerry Merriman, director of the Student Work Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), issue a four-part challenge to them during the special commissioning ceremony on the evening of March 27.

"We cannot lift the world if we are not higher than the world. We cannot move the world if we are moved around by the world. We cannot sweeten the world if we are not sweeter than the world, and we cannot light the world if there is the darkness of sin in our own lives," he said.

Student summer missionaries usually serve an 8-10 week term on their assigned fields. They receive an expense allowance while on the field, along with an honorarium upon completing their summer mission term of service.

The students were also addressed by Morris Baker, minister to stu-

dents at First Church, Gulfport; Jim Futral, pastor of Broadmoor Church, Jackson; Lucy Hansford, elementary teacher from Jackson; Jeff Lewis, national student ministry consultant with the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville; Gary Maze, pastor of Horizon Community Church in Ridgeland; and Buddy Wagner, director of counseling and career development at Mississippi College in Clinton.

The 1993 State Student Conference will be held Sept. 24-25, at First Church, Jackson. The 1994 BSU Leadership Training Conference is scheduled for March 25-27, 1994, at Gulfshore Baptist Assembly.

For more information, contact the Student Work Department, MBCB, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800.

Staff Changes

First Church, Pontotoc, has called **William (Bill) Sims III** as pastor effective April 25. A native of Humboldt, Tenn., he previously served at Reynoldsburg Church, Reynoldsburg, Ohio. Sims received his doctoral degree



Sims

from New Orleans Seminary.

New Palestine Church, Picayune, has called **Grover Glenn III** as pastor effective March 16. A native of Greenville, he received his education at Mississippi College and New Orleans Seminary. His previous place of service was Arkadelphia Church, Bailey.



Glenn

and attended Mid-America Seminary in Memphis. His previous place of service was New Oak Grove Church, Myrtle.

Colonial Heights Church, Jackson, has called **Mark Bricker** as associate pastor/minister of education effective May 2. He is formerly the minister of education at First Church, Cabot, Ark. Bricker received his education at Stetson University, Deland, Fla. and Southwestern Seminary.



Bricker

James Welch of Jackson has been called as pastor by **Sherman Church, Lee County**. He previously served Hillcrest Church, Jackson, Tenn. Welch will move to his new position around the middle of April.



Smith

Thrasher Church, Booneville, has called **Charles E. Smith Jr.** as pastor. He is a native of Duncan, a graduate of Mississippi State University,

Holy Land

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SPURGEON

From page 3

again to 3,893. The total includes career and associate missionaries and International Service Corps workers and journeymen serving overseas for two years.

Kammerdiener said he agreed with Spurgeon's assessment that the Bold Mission Thrust missionary goal is a "casualty" of the denomination's political struggles. However, he added, "I would not focus on one side of the controversy. I think war is caused by two sides who agree that they are going to battle. There is no question in my mind that the intent of Bold Mission Thrust and the spiritual vitality of what we've been doing has been drained off by excessive energy going into the controversy and to fighting the wrong enemy. But I would disagree with those who think it's one-sided."

Spurgeon, in his letter, also voiced grief over "the losses we have suffered because of the trustees' preoccupation with being politically correct.... We have lost heart, causing this great agency to move at a snail's pace."

He wrote that he felt in danger of losing his integrity if he stayed at the board under current circumstances. He said he prayed that "by God's sovereign grace this board will soon return to its only agenda, that of seeking to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to everyone in the world who has never heard. I no longer see how this can happen in my lifetime."

Spurgeon's letter cited several examples of trustee decisions he felt were politically motivated. These included the trustees' October 1991 action to cancel funding promised to the Baptist Theologi-

cal Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland; their refusal to affirm Parks' leadership through 1995; and the turning of a February 1993 dialogue with Woman's Missionary Union leaders into a "tense confrontation."

He pointed out that Woman's Missionary Union had helped the Foreign Mission Board raise more than \$1 billion for missions in the auxiliary's 105-year history. "If the board had acted in the interest of our missionaries and world evangelization, they would have strongly commended the WMU for their tireless and sacrificial efforts on behalf of missions and sought ways of continued cooperation," he said.

Spurgeon further charged that trustees had violated Foreign Mission Board policy by bringing in their own candidates for board-elected staff positions. Current personnel policy says trustee committees are to select such staff based on recommendations by the president.

He also cited the trustees' recommendation that a consulting firm begin a study on the effectiveness of the agency's organization before a new president is in place. The study would likely be conducted by a secular firm with little knowledge of the board's purpose at a cost of "hundreds of thousands of dollars," Spurgeon noted, charging the study "appears to have little to do with missions."

In the wake of Spurgeon's "retirement in protest" announcement at the Foreign Mission Board, two staff members who plan to stay are offering a very different perspective.

Alan Compton, a missionary for 23 years and board vice president for communications since 1988, sent a memorandum April 2 to interim president Don Kammerdiener, copying trustees, other high-level administrators, communications staffers, and Baptist Press. In it, he said his own daily decision to continue serving the Foreign Mission Board is a "matter of integrity" based on "my call and commitment to Christ and his mission in the world," family members, and almost 3,900 missionaries.

The same day, Thurmon Bryant, associate vice president for mission personnel, wrote Kammerdiener that he felt "the vast majority of our administrative staff remains firm" in commitment to missions and to the Foreign Mission Board. Bryant, a missionary to Brazil for 14 years and area director for Eastern South America for a decade, now supervises missionary health and services, volunteers and missionary orientation, and development.

The statements came two days after the announcement by Spurgeon, board vice president for mission personnel, that he will retire early.



Parks speaks to CBF

Speaking before a Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) group April 2, Keith Parks, former president of the Foreign Mission Board and now missions coordinator for CBF, pin-pointed the CBF missionary hope. Parks emphatically declared, "we are Southern Baptists and we need an alternate giving channel." The Lord is moving among Southern Baptists, and CBF is "getting back to who we are." Declaring that "God led me" to accept the CBF position, Parks outlined the growth for the group. About two churches per day are being added to the CBF giving record. Now 1,016 churches are giving to support 20 missionaries. "We are not trying to recruit veteran missionaries though we do try to respond when they call or write." He indicated that about 150 FMB missionaries had made inquiries to CBF. Parks said the CBF 1992 budget was \$7.2 million, with up to 77% of that amount divided among SBC causes. "Up to one-fourth of the world live isolated from the gospel," Parks said. "We are mapping the world according to ethnic and language groups and missionaries could well be appointed to Turks, Czechs, or Slovaks wherever they live." About 120 people attended the informal meeting. A number of retired missionaries who had worked with Parks were present. — GH

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North Carolina hosts first state Fellowship meeting

GREENSBORO, N.C. (ABP) — About 1,000 Baptists in North Carolina attended the first meeting of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in the state and laid plans for what could become a statewide Fellowship chapter. The two-day meeting, held at First Church of Greensboro, featured three speakers from the national

Fellowship organization — Coordinator Cecil Sherman, Missions Coordinator Keith Parks, and Moderator-elect Hardy Clemons. As of March, 181 Baptist churches in North Carolina are contributing funds through the national Cooperative Baptist Fellowship — more than in any other state.

MBMC offers April classes

The Mississippi Baptist Medical Center will offer the following classes during the month of April: Monthly Arthritis Seminar/luncheon, April 12, noon: open house at Diabetes Learning Center, April 13, 4-6 p.m.; "Nutrition InfoLine" session, April 15, noon-5:30 p.m.; H.O.P.E. support group, April 15, 6 p.m.; self breast exam class, April 15, 6 p.m.; Super Sitters, for baby sitters ages 11 to 15, April 17, 9 a.m.-noon; Asthma-non, April 19, 6:30 p.m.; Diabetes lecture, "Foot Care/Foot Wear," April 20, 7 p.m.; glucose testing on April 21, 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m.; Living Thru Cancer, April 13 and 27, 7 p.m.; adult swimming lessons; six-week course for "Arthritis Self-Help Course" held each Tuesday at 1 and 6 p.m. For additional information, call Laura Jones at 968-5135.

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FRIENDSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH, Grenada, is seeking a full-time music and youth staff person. Resumes should be sent to, Friendship Baptist Church, Search Committee, 476 Pearidge Road, Grenada, MS 38901, phone (601) 226-4658. Pastor is Rev. Guy Hughes.

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CEDAR HILLS BAPTIST CHURCH in Jacksonville, Florida, is seeking a full-time minister of music/youth. Interviews will be conducted at New Orleans Seminary, Frost Building #204, April 15. Contact (904) 771-1145 to schedule interviews or for more information.

THE COMMUNITY BAPTIST CHURCH in Columbus, Miss., is presently looking for a part time minister of music and youth. Any individual who is interested should mail a resume to: Community Baptist Church, Search Committee Chairman, 2490 Yorkville Road East, Columbus, MS 39702 or they may call 327-5306 or 328-2105.

Uniform

I have seen the Lord



By Chuck Pourciau
John 20:1-18

Easter means different things to different people. In my early childhood it meant family, Easter baskets, Easter egg hunts, bright sunshine, and those disgusting new dress clothes Mom always made us wear. Yet it was the Easter of 1971 that took on an entirely new meaning for me, for that was my first Easter as a child of God. I had seen the Lord. That Easter brought both sadness and gladness. I was sad because of the pain that Jesus had to suffer because of me. I was glad that he was willing to suffer that pain and then defeat death. What did the first Easter mean to the three people in this account?

Mary's discovery of the empty tomb (vv. 1-2). The arrest and crucifixion of Jesus had caused many of his followers to turn on him and others to go into hiding, but not Mary Magdalene. At the first opportunity after the Sabbath she went to the tomb. Her disappointment did not alter her commitment. One would expect that the empty tomb of the Lord would be discovered by the leading disciple, the high priest, or some other important figure. Yet it was a formerly demon-possessed woman who John records discovering the empty tomb.

We can learn a lesson from Mary's continued commitment even during devastating disappointment. She did not yet understand that Jesus would rise again, but she nevertheless was not ashamed to admit that she loved him. Christians often must face personal devastation in life. It is then that one's commitment to Jesus is put to the test. Being able to remain committed during personal devastation and grief is helpful both to ourselves and to our witness.

The fact that Mary played such an important role in that first Easter shows that God's family and work are intended for all types of people. A person's past will never disqualify him from being greatly used by God in the future.

The disciples' inspection of the tomb (vv. 3-10). Peter and the beloved disciple rushed to the tomb. The beloved disciple stopped at the entrance of the tomb and looked in. Peter ran on by him to get a closer look at where the body of Jesus had been. I want to examine two important aspects of this account. First, the burial clothes were lying neatly in the tomb. This fact was an emphasis on the fact that Jesus has risen in a spiritual body and was no longer bound by the natural order. Second, after seeing the empty tomb, the beloved disciple grasped its significance and believed in the risen Christ to which it pointed.

The empty tomb was the first piece of evidence to point to the fact that we serve a risen Savior. The beloved disciple displayed tremendous faith when he believed on the basis of that alone. We know of the post resurrection appearances of Jesus. We know how the Spirit ignited a fire that spread the gospel across the known world within a few years. We have the New Testament. We have 2000 years of Christian history. Why is it that so many still find it difficult to believe?

Mary's discovery of the Lord (vv. 11-18). Mary, her eyes brimming with tears and her mind numbed with grief, did not recognize Jesus. She had not imagined the tragedy could get any worse, but now it had. It had been compounded by someone stealing the body of Jesus. Finally Jesus said the one word that turned her grief to joy, "Mary." She went to the disciples with a very simple message: "I have seen the Lord."

Many times our problems can blind us to the answer to those problems. Yet Jesus continues patiently to offer his answer of hope. Let us do like Mary and take our eyes off the problem and place them on the answer. It is then that we will be able to report to all we encounter that "I have seen the Lord."

Two years ago I learned what Easter meant to my seven year old daughter. She and I were discussing her Sunday School lesson for Easter. She was telling me about the crucifixion and exclaimed, "This is my favorite Bible story." Somewhat surprised I asked why. She informed me that it just was. Then I said, "But it tells about Jesus suffering and dying on the cross. Why is that your favorite Bible story?" She explained, "Because it shows me how much God loves me." I can add nothing to that.

Pourciau is pastor, First Church, Louisville.

Bible Book

Jesus has risen



By Guy A. Hughes
Matthew 28

The most difficult task of my ministry, thus far, has been to tell a young girl her father had been killed in an automobile accident. The mother, fearful of how the child would handle it, requested my assistance. The little girl, bright-eyed and smiling, walked into my office. I revealed what happened and delicately tried to explain she would never again see her father on this earth.

There is no way to prepare someone for such a moment. Death, of any kind, leaves us in shock and confusion. It was no different for her. She left no longer smiling and her eyes lost their sparkle. I hate death and I'm glad God does, too.

The angel's announcement to the women (28:1-8). It was the end of the sabbath. The light of the new day could not shine through the dark cloud of grief in Mary Magdalene's heart. On her way to visit the tomb, thoughts of Jesus filled her mind. She first met him when Jesus cast seven demons from her (Luke 8:2). Her gratefulness became evident by her devotion. She participated in his itinerant mission in Galilee and contributed to the mission (Luke 8:1-3; Mark 15:40-41). She was present at the crucifixion and watched Jesus draw his last breath (Mark 15:40; John 19:25). She had now come to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body (Mark 16:1; Luke 23:55f). She was shocked by the sting of death but was about to receive news which would change, forever, man's view of death.

On that morning, God sent an earthshaking announcement by an angel of the Lord seated upon the stone which once covered the tomb, "He is not here! He has risen! Just as he said!" The revelation should have come as no surprise. Several times, during his ministry Jesus predicted his resurrection (Matt. 12:40; 16:21; 17:23; 20:19). Yet (as today) people refused to believe such wonderful news: Death can be overcome! The angel then commissioned Mary and the "other" Mary (the mother of James the Younger) "to tell his disciples." When confronted with the truth of the resurrection we are compelled to share it with others.

Jesus' appearance to the women (28:9-10). As the women hurried away from the tomb, "afraid yet filled with joy," Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said and they clasped his feet to worship him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid" (v. 10). We have nothing to fear when we worship the risen Lord Jesus. Our greatest fear, death, has been overcome by him. We need to let him eliminate our fear of the unknown and unexpected in our lives. Our courage will then lead us to proclaim the good news to others.

Then Jesus said, "Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me." And one day we will see him too. "Beloved, we are God's children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2).

Jesus' commission to the disciples (28:16-20). An unspecified amount of time elapsed between 28:10 and 28:16. The eleven disciples are now gathered on a mountain where Jesus told them to go. Jesus appeared to them. Some worshipped. Some doubted. He said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." There are some who believe Satan is in control of the earth. Not so! He could not keep Jesus in the belly of the earth because Jesus holds the keys to death, hell, and the grave. He is in control! Because of this authority, we can go and make other disciples because we know whatever we do the gates of hell will not prevail against us. The risen Jesus is watching over his church!

Richard Vinson tells about his first year in seminary: "I was taking a course called 'The Resurrection Narratives,' in which we studied all those stories. We read scholarly books and essays about what we could prove and what we should believe. Then one day our professor came in rather shaken. He had played tennis the afternoon before with a friend of his who had a heart attack in the middle of their game and subsequently died at the hospital. 'Brothers and sisters,' he said to us, 'after all the arguments and debates are over, I believe in the resurrection because without it, life makes no sense.'"

Hughes is pastor, Friendship Church, Grenada.

Life and Work

The risen Lord's command



By Laura Russell
Luke 24: 36-39, 45-47;
Acts 1:3, 6-8

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the central fact of Christian history. On it, the church is built; without it there would be no Christian church today. Jesus' resurrection is unique. Other religions have strong ethical systems, concepts about paradise, and various holy scriptures. Only Christianity has a God who became man, literally died for his people, and was raised again in power and glory to rule his church forever.

The risen Lord appears to his disciples (Luke 24:36-39). The risen Christ seemed to have the ability to appear and disappear at will. His resurrected body possessed powers that transcended the laws of ordinary matter. Jesus' body wasn't just a restored human body like Lazarus' body (John 11) because he could appear and disappear. Jesus' resurrected body was even more real than before; it was now immortal.

Obviously, the disciples were not expecting Jesus, therefore they were terrified. Jesus spoke to them about their unbelief. The scars that he carried indicated his identity with the man they had seen crucified.

Jesus teaches them about his ministry and theirs (Luke 24:45-47; Acts 1:3). This appearance of Jesus was not his last, but it is the last Luke records before the ascension. He uses it to bring out the message that Jesus expected his disciples to deliver to the world. Luke wanted everyone to know that Christ's message of God's love and forgiveness should go to all the world.

The book of Acts continues the story Luke began in his gospel. He says that the disciples were eyewitnesses to all that had happened to Jesus Christ — his life before his crucifixion and the 40 days after his resurrection as he taught them more about the kingdom of God. Luke explains that with Jesus' coming, the kingdom of God was begun, and believers are to work to spread God's kingdom across the world. What the early church started, we must continue.

The disciples ask about restoring Israel (Acts 1:6-7). During the years of Jesus' ministry on earth, the disciples continually wondered about his kingdom. When would it come? What would be their role? In the traditional view, the Messiah would be an earthly conqueror who would free Israel from Rome. But the kingdom Jesus spoke about was first a spiritual kingdom established in the hearts and lives of believers.

The kingdom would not come by rules of the calendar, but through witnessing to the ends of the earth by men empowered by the Holy Spirit. Jesus sought to turn the disciples from national ambition to world missions.

Jesus clearly defines their worldwide ministry (Acts 1:8). Jesus promised the disciples that they would receive power to witness after they received the Holy Spirit. Notice the progression: 1) they received the Holy Spirit, 2) he gave them power, and 3) they witnessed with extraordinary results. Jesus instructed his disciples to witness to people of all nations about him (Matt. 28:19, 20). But they were told to wait first for the Holy Spirit. This verse describes a series of ever-widening circles. The gospel was to spread from Jerusalem, into Judea and Samaria, and finally to the whole world. It would begin with the devout Jews in Jerusalem and Samaria, spread to the mixed race in Samaria, and finally be offered to the Gentiles in the uttermost parts of the earth. God's gospel has not reached its final destination if someone in your family, your workplace, your school, or your community hasn't heard about Jesus Christ. Power from the Holy Spirit is not limited to strength beyond the ordinary — it involves courage, boldness, confidence, insight, ability, and authority. The disciples would need all of these to fulfill their mission. If you believe in Jesus Christ, you can experience the power of the Holy Spirit in your life.

The resurrection of Christ is the center of the Christian faith. Because Christ rose from the dead as he promised, we know that what he said is true — he is God. Because he rose, we have certainty that our sins are forgiven. Because he rose, he lives and represents us to God. Because he rose and defeated death, we know we will also rise. Because he rose, authority is given to the church's witness in the world.

Russell is a member of First Church, Brandon.

capsules

ARKANSAS BAPTIST MODERATES ESTABLISH STATE FELLOWSHIP: LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (ABP) — The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Arkansas was officially established March 5 when approximately 100 participants gathered in Little Rock to adopt a constitution and bylaws. According to Billy White, who was elected moderator of the group, "This obviously has been a long time coming. There have been little fellowships of concern about the entire takeover process in the Southern Baptist Convention for several years." The state Fellowship grew out of a more informal group known as the Arkansas Fellowship of Concerned Southern Baptists. The new organization will relate directly to the national Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a moderate group formed two years ago in response to ultraconservative control of the SBC.

SON'S BAPTISM IN PARIS LEADS MOTHER TO A BAPTIST CHURCH IN ROMANIA: PARIS, France (EBPS) — A son's baptism in Paris has led his mother to visit a Baptist church in Bucharest for the first time. For many years Jeremy Hodoroaba broadcast Christian radio programs into Romania. On Feb. 14, 1993, Hodoroaba baptized a Romanian couple in the Rue de Lille Baptist Church in Paris. The woman who was baptized, Antoanela Stan, is a sculptor and painter; her husband, Lucian Popescu, is an engineer. The couple came to Paris from Romania last year and began attending the Baptist church soon after their arrival. Many first-time visitors witnessed their baptism in the Paris church. Recently Lucian received word that when his mother had heard of his baptism she became curious and attended a Baptist church in Bucharest for the first time. The Hodoroabas, who continue to maintain contacts in Romania and within the Romanian immigrants in Paris, have begun corresponding with Lucian's mother.

SHERMAN DENOUNCES HOMOSEXUALITY TO PREEMPT CRITICISM OF FELLOWSHIP: ATLANTA (ABP) — Homosexuality is a sin, and homosexuals should be told God can change their orientation, says the top official of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Cecil Sherman, Fellowship coordinator, spelled out his views in his regular column in the April 1 issue of the moderate newspaper *Baptists Today*. While Christians should oppose homosexuality, Sherman wrote, they should do so in "the Spirit of Jesus." He predicted the Atlanta-based Fellowship will not appoint gays as missionaries. Sherman's column represents the first time a Fellowship official has taken a public position on homosexuality. While the issue has gotten a lot of attention among Southern Baptists in the past year, the Fellowship, a group of moderate Southern Baptists, has tried to avoid the controversy. "The Bible teaches homosexuality is a sin," Sherman wrote, and gays who argue otherwise "twist" Scripture. But, Sherman continued, Christians should seek "the spirit of Jesus" in dealing with homosexuals and avoid gay bashing. "It is the way of too many Christian people to hold the homosexual up to scorn," he wrote. "We almost take some strange pleasure in beating up on the gay community." He cited Jesus' treatment of the woman caught in adultery as a worthy example (John 8). Jesus identified her lifestyle as sinful but still had compassion for her, Sherman wrote. "We are conservative, Bible-believing Baptists," he said. "But there is one difference in CBF; we are making a conscious effort to catch the spirit of Christ as we deal with human beings who fall short of the glory of God. Are we against homosexuals? Yes, we are against the sin. But we have a wonderful message for those people. We want to get close enough to them to say it: God loves you, sent his Son to die for you. You can be remade by the grace of God."

Devotional

Afraid of the dark

By Randy Turner

My wife Sharon and I have two children. We are continually challenged to model the correct behavior for them. We are also surprised at how much they can teach us. Most parents can identify with how our theology is more clearly defined when we have children of our own. The following is an entry made in my journal some time ago, when John was 6 and Beth was 3:

"It is 3:26 a.m. Beth cried out about a half hour ago and we have not been able to go back to sleep. When her mother went to see about her, she said, 'Too dark, Mommy, too dark.' After consoling Beth, Sharon asked if she wanted her to leave the door open. She did, and went back to sleep instantly.

"As I lay staring at the ceiling, it occurred to me that darkness makes me cry, too. The darkness of sin and all the ways it exhibits itself: disease, oppression, addiction, hunger, brokenness of heart and home, complacency, indifference, despair, and death. Sometimes I feel almost overwhelmed and want to cry out, 'Too dark, too dark!'

"Then I am reminded by a loving Father that he has left open 'The Door' that lets in 'The Light of the world.' Darkness is pushed back and I am instantly at rest."

"If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with the other, and the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

Turner is pastor, First Church, Hattiesburg.

Does religion have any place in the nation's public schools?

By J. Brent Walker

Has God been thrown out of the public schools? Not at all. The U.S. Supreme Court has held only that the state cannot constitutionally sponsor religion in the classroom. It is not the school's job to tell or even suggest to children how, when, or what to pray. Teachers cannot and should not lead in devotional Bible reading or other religious exercises. School officials should not proselytize as if they were the outreach arm of the local Baptist church.

But God has not been banished from the classroom. Religion does have a place in the public school system. Religious expression can take many forms.

First, the schools are perfectly free to teach about religion even though they are precluded from sponsoring the practice of religion. America's children must be told about the influence of religion on the development of American culture. To fail to teach these truths would be to skew history and exhibit hostility to religion. Courses in comparative religion and Bible-as-literature can and should be included in the curriculum.

Second, schools may participate in "released-time" programs. A school may allow students to attend classes in religious instruction at an off-campus church or

other site. Although not used much anymore, this has been a helpful and constitutionally permissible way to accommodate the religious needs of students.

Third, there is equal access. If a public school allows other non-curriculum related student groups to meet on campus before or after school, it must allow religious groups to meet on an equal basis. The Equal Access Act, upheld by the Supreme Court in 1990, disallows discrimination by the schools on the basis of "religious, political, philosophical or other content of

speech." These meetings must be student-initiated but need not be devoted to learning about religion. They may be overtly sectarian, involving prayer and Bible study.

Fourth, within some limits schools cannot interfere with the individual free exercise rights of the students. Students may pray whenever and to whomever they like — whether in the classroom, lunchroom or the playing field — provided they do not disrupt the educational process. Students cannot be prevented from bringing Bibles or other religious literature to school. They may read their Bibles during free time and even discuss their reading with others. They cannot be prevented from sharing their faith as long as they respect the other students' rights to be left alone.

Again, it's only state-sponsored religion, not student religious speech and practice, that is prohibited by the Constitution. Indeed, the free exercise and free speech clauses often require the schools to accommodate the latter.

Has God been thrown out of the public schools? Maybe the faceless God of civil religion has, but the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jesus has never missed a roll call.

Walker is Associate General Counsel, BJC.



God and Country

Public schools and religion

Third in a Series

Clinton pastor pursues mission in India

By Tommy N. Snyder

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." With these words echoing in our hearts, Rick Via of Roanoke, Va., and I left on Jan. 11 to preach two weeks in India.

With one-sixth of the world's population, India is a ripe mission field. A recent Foreign Mission Board study pointed out that India is predominantly Hindu and, with the exception of physician Rebekah Naylor, is closed to Southern Baptist missionaries.

Our crusade work was coordinated through the All-India Prayer Fellowship, led by P.N. Kurien. This organization is one of the most effective evangelistic ministries in India. Via and I preached three crusades and witnessed over 2,800 recorded salvation decisions. Please pray for this ministry as it assists the churches in disciplining these new believers.

Wildwood Church, Clinton, became closely involved in this mission endeavor. They not only gave me their blessing and provided funds to go, they also gave \$3,000 to build three village churches in India!

One of the highlights of the trip was to meet the pastor of a church built in memory of my father, H.L. Snyder. While I was on a trip to India in January 1991, my dad died. What a joy to visit that church, meet and pray with the pastor, and hear that 200 people meet there every week to study God's Word.

India presents a challenge. Only 3% of this country is Christian. It is reported that India will overtake China as the most populated nation in the world within the next decade. As I saw the number of people in India, I was reminded of Matthew's words about Jesus: "But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved

with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd."

What can you and I do about this need? We can pray for India. William Carey spent 41 years on this mission field. The statement, "Attempt great things for God and expect great things from God," is attributed to him. May the Lord burden our hearts for a country that has "fields white unto harvest." May we expect a revival in India.

Snyder is pastor, Wildwood Church, Clinton.



Snyder

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